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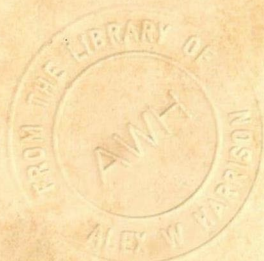
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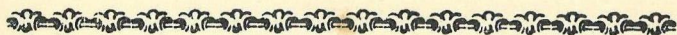


CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

By the same Author :

THE FARTHING SPINSTER

CATHERINE DODD



Clad in Purple Mist



JARROLD'S *Publishers* LONDON
Limited, 10 and 11 Warwick Lane

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

John Wright & Sons Ltd., Stone Bridge, Bristol.

"An island like a little book
Full of a hundred tales."

Chesterton.

"It's clad in purple mist my land,
In regal robe it is apparellèd,
A crown is set upon its head,
And on its breast a golden band,
Land, ho ! land."

T. E. Brown.

All the characters in this story are fictitious.

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. THE LAWSUIT - - -	17
„ II. THE QUILLIAMS OF DERBYHAVEN -	29
„ III. THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA -	37
„ IV. A BUNDLE OF COTTONS - -	47
„ V. A NEW SILK GOWN - -	59
„ VI. MANX STORIES - - -	71
„ VII. SWORD AND CUP CARDS - -	84
„ VIII. STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN -	96
„ IX. THE TITHE ON TURNIPS - -	111
„ X. MOLLIE IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING - - -	124
„ XI. ILLIAM DHONE - - -	137
„ XII. ON A CONVICT SHIP - -	150
„ XIII. A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK -	165
„ XIV. A RESPECTABLE SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES - - -	176
„ XV. COINCIDENCES - - -	191
„ XVI. BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD -	207
„ XVII. FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL - -	219
„ XVIII. THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN -	233
„ XIX. MOLLIE'S VICTORY - -	242
„ XX. THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS -	258

EPILOGUE

PROLOGUE



PROLOGUE

LETTER from Miss Jellis Farthing, Isle of Man, to her niece Miss Ann Farthing, London, dated 1913:—

“ My dear Ann,

You ask me about your grandmother's country and people. Come and see them :—

‘ This is a fairy land !
We talk with goblins and elfin sprites.’

Or did, in the days of my mother, Faith Quilliam of Derbyhaven. But alas ! ‘ old Manx is dying,’ slain by that monster, uniform, compulsory education. Come and walk with me, dear Ann, to the places your grandmother knew and loved. The Fort Island, Langness, Santon, and Derbyhaven on one side of Castletown Bay ; on the other Scarlet, the Stack, Poolvaish ; and further afield Port Erin, Bradda Head, the Sound and the Chasms ; above all you must see Barrule Mountain. Sea, mountains, sky, cliffs, shores, sands, sea-birds, gorse and heather ; there is nothing in the world like it. Smaller than any county in England except Rutlandshire, yet with its own laws, language, parliament, and in earlier times, Kings, it is indeed a complete sampler in miniature. Set like a gem in the silver sea, it was loved by the beings of the early world. At the beginning of time the fairies held it, lurking amid sweet rushes by mountain streams. Next came the giants, tall as poplars, and the fairies fled affrighted before them and hid themselves. There was much disorder in the land until Mannanan came. A prince of royal blood was he ; related to the Scotch and Irish Kings. Much subtlety had he, and a masterly mind. He was a magician too, a kind of Merlin, with never a Vivien to betray him. He subdued the giants and bound them in spells until the end of the world. He laid them in great subterranean palaces, fast asleep with a book

PROLOGUE

under their heads, a sword beside them, and there they lie to this day. Deep down under Castle Rushen, under the Fort Island, and under Ronaldsway at Derbyhaven are these palaces. As a King, Mannanan waged war mightily, for he could make one armed man on the hillside appear as a hundred ; as a landlord he was perfection, for he exacted from his tenants only a bundle of grass as yearly rent. Everybody was safe under his rule, for he hid his island from the rest of the world under his mantle of purple mist. He spun and wove this delicate fabric out of the sea and sky. To this day, remnants of his mantle still enshroud the land ; and many a time have I seen it, when sailing towards the island. Sea and sky seem to meet, and a soft purple haze covers the land, but the Man at the Wheel is not deceived, onward he steers. Presently a corner of the mantle is raised showing faint outlines of blue mountains, then emerald patches of meadowland, then grey rocks standing out of the blue sea. The mantle is completely lifted when farms and cottages on the hillsides are distinct. Mannanan was finally driven away by the good St. Patrick, whose weapon was the holy Cross. The saint came to the Fort Island—this is on the authority of my mother—and Mannanan with his pagan friends fled before him. St. Patrick converted everybody in the Island to Christianity :—

‘ Over the sea, he drove Mannanan
And with him his evil horde,
For to those who were evil and Pagan
He showed neither favour nor mercy.
And the Island was blessed from end to end,
And there was never a beggar in it,
Nor was there one who denied the Christ God
Or refused the great Saint belief.’

I fancy the good monks of Rushen Abbey, Ballasalla, had a hand in making the ballads of the people. True teachers were they, know-

PROLOGUE

ing human nature ; and they linked up the old legends with the Christianity they desired to teach ; so the people, loving the legends, learnt Christianity. Derbyhaven, your grandmother's birthplace, is only a little village, with never a shop in it to this day ; yet the legends around it would fill a volume. Beyond Langness is a beautiful city sunk under the sea. Sailors sailing above sometimes hear the tinkling of church bells from the depths ; and if a young boy be aboard, he may catch a glimpse of domes, towers, and spires of crystal and gold. A tiny islet just across Derbyhaven Bay is the Fort Island. The Fort is a ruin, and so is the little church, hoary with its age of fifteen hundred years ; so small is the church that a modern dining-room would put it to shame, built of stone with never a tool. This church, my dear Ann, is said to be the ancient Soder of the Bishopric of Sodor and Man ; and one of the oldest churches in the British Isles. Now do not contradict me, I am aware that busybodies are abroad, prying into ruins and legends to belittle them. These persons are called historians ; and the more gilt they take off the gingerbread, the greater is their fame. Read for yourself ' Camdens Britannina,' and use your common sense. Would time permit, I would tell you of Illiam Dhone—the fair-haired William—of the Manx ballads, who for his virtues was shot on Hango Hill. Prying folk have been busy with his name too, and love to call him a traitor instead of a patriot. Thus does Time deal with the lofty. And, you shall see the Race-Course, where the great Stanley—James, the seventh Earl of Derby—celebrated his birthday long ago by instituting horse races there. These races*

* Their chief town they count Russin on the South Side—is commonly called Castletown, where within a little island Pope Gregory IV instituted an Episcopal See, the Bishop whereof named Sodorenensis (of this very island, it is thought) had jurisdiction in past times over all the islands.

PROLOGUE

are run at Epsom now. And you shall see the wondrous rocks and caves at Langness ; and Santon Glen with its river and enchanting coves, where long ago dwelt the Phynnodderee. But come soon and see for yourself :—

‘ An island like a little book
Full of a hundred tales.’

Come before the gorse fades and the heather pales, for—

‘ There are rocks and waves at Scarlet still
And gorse runs riot in Glen Chass—thank God’* ;
and—

‘ There are blaeberries on old Barrule
And Langness has its heather still—thank God.’*

Aunt Patience is a marvellous old woman. You would love to see her. She is modern too. She enjoyed reading Maselfield’s ‘ The Widow of the Bye Street.’ She said it was strong, like the old Manx Ballads.

*Ever your own Aunt,
Jellis Farthing.”*

* T. E. Brown.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST'

CHAPTER I

THE LAWSUIT

"What noggins have I drunk of smuggled rum,
Just from the little Isle of 'Three Legs' come."

See "Guy Mannering" : Sir Walter Scott.

"O! dear Mannin Veg
In the midst of the Sea,
In her are many fishermen.
When the barley's sown
And potatoes set
They go away to mend their boats."
Old Ballad.

§ i

FLAME-WHITE sunshine lay upon the fields, as Michael Quilliam jogged along the Castletown Road on his way to Derbyhaven. The corn of the "Creggins" was bending with the weight of its golden burden, and the gorse in the hedges was ablaze—there is no gorse in the world to rival the Manx gorse in its profuseness and nutty fragrance. On the distant hillsides, white cottages lay scattered like stars in a summer's dusk; and beyond were the purple mountains. Michael was depressed, for he was usually a hopeful person; but failure chills even sanguine souls. To-day Michael had lost his lawsuit. He was a just man and genial too, with a

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

touch of idealism to relieve the somewhat melancholy Manx temperament. He was also a man "with learning at him," for was not his mother "one of the English strangers, not Manx at all; a body middlin' high up, who had seen the King of England an' the sights of London, an' the lek." So said his neighbours. Michael Quilliam hated litigation and tried to avoid it; but litigation had always been the failing of the Manx folk. A fancied slight, a hasty word, which a smile or a friendly hand would heal in a more generously impulsive race, are brooded over by the morose and sensitive Manx, and magnified into misdeeds of the blackest dye. And the attorneys who batten on the failings of mankind, prospered; for a malicious industry thrived in the Isle of Man, and there were many attorneys. Very sympathetic they were in giving advice, and magnifying the misunderstanding into an intolerable offence, until legal action was taken. Success depended more upon the accommodating evidence of witnesses, and the plausibility of the attorney, than the justice of the cause. One pleader poured forth his prejudiced statements, which the other pleader eloquently returned. A lawsuit, at best, is a sordid business, where much mud is thrown; and neither party gets ample satisfaction. If the Manx had more humour, they would be less litigious; for the ability to laugh at oneself lightens the burdens, as we journey through life.

Michael Quilliam was a fair-minded man with a laugh ready to disarm an antagonist, and he was prone to judge others favourably; but he knew that in this instance wrong had triumphed. He knew that his cause was just; that his opponent had perjured herself; and he knew too that the Deemster had been predisposed in her favour, by her attentions and presents—young lobsters, fresh from the sea,

THE LAWSUIT

tender young ducks, and bunches of purple grapes—delicate attentions, which if a Deemster be human he must appreciate. Let me make it clear at the outset—lest I incur the wrath of Deemsters and others—that I am writing of the past, more than a hundred years ago in fact, and since then enlightenment has doubtless removed from the Manx people all the failings of their fathers. Michael's thought ran darkly on the lawyers. "Thieving rascals," he muttered, as he jogged onwards, then a shaft of sunlight smote him full in the face, and he drew in a deep breath of sea-sprayed air, with the smell of the gorse and heather in it. "The Earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," he said as he looked seaward.

Before him lay Castletown Bay, a shimmering sea of peacock-blue dashed with white streaks, as the masses of snowy surf broke on the sands. A spacious horseshoe bay it was, with the Scarlet Rocks and the Stack beyond Castletown; and on the opposite side the rugged coast running to Langness Point, with its contorted rocks, and never a lighthouse to warn unwary ships of disaster. An ancient little town was Castletown, lying around Castle Rushen built by a Danish prince nearly a thousand years ago; nor was it a ruin, but a stately habitation suited to the dignity of the Governor, and used as the prison for the wicked folks of the Island. The earthen fences beside the road were clothed with short sweet herbage, stone-crop and wild thyme, and crowded with yellow trefoil and blue harebells. It was among the flowers of these fences the fairies loved to lurk; for stray fairies dwelt in the Isle of Man, even at this time. Michael passed Hango Hill with its ancient ruins where William Christian of Ronaldsway was shot for treason against his lord in the reign of Charles II.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

William Christian, the fair-haired *Illiam Dhone* of the Manx ballads. "Ay!" muttered Michael, glancing at the ruins on the hill, "murdered he was for his virtues, like many another good man." On he jogged till he reached the Big Cellar, a legacy from the smuggling days; he looked across the Race-Course where the fishermen's nets lay drying in the sun; and children were picking out the little starfish, and coarse bits of coral entangled in the meshes. Here, he overtook old Pyee in her ancient plaid shawl, her bag on her back, her staff in her hand. Pyee was no beggar, for beggars hardly existed in the island, but she gained her livelihood by wandering about "going on the houses." She had friends everywhere, whom she visited at intervals, carrying gossip and news, and making herself useful in the activities of the household. "Good day to thee, Pyee," called Michael.

"Shee bannee mee! (Peace bless me) 'tis the Masther himself," said Pyee, "an' how's theeself, Masther?"

"Middlin' Pyee, just middlin'."

"Aw! Masther, it's shockin' news I'm hearing about the Shuit."

"At! 'tis myself that's lost it, Pyee."

"An yander one ha'st got the better of thee: that's ter'ble hard, Masther."

"'Tis so, Pyee."

"The curses of God be on her," cried Pyee, pointing with her staff to a grey house in the distance, "on her land an' her cattle an' her childer."

"Hush, woman, hush! don't be scattering thy curses in that way on thy neighbours."

"A murrain be upon her," went on Pyee, "a *jousbag* (shrew) of a woman, Masther, goin' about with a *whussan*

THE LAWSUIT

(scolding activity) on her; an' every soul about that freckened, you'd wonder. One chile I had, a rare slip of a girl, an' she hired with Misthress Kerruish. A *skeet* (spying) of a woman she is, takin' notions that folks is cheatin' an' thievin'. She said me poor Katty tuk a bit of a shawl, Masther, an' turned the chile out of her house in a ter'ble storm. She started to walk to me lil' farm on Barrule an' got her death she did, with the couth; me poor Katty," and Pyee wailed aloud.

"Don't be takin' on so, Pyee woman," said Michael kindly.

"'Tis a lone widdy woman I am, Masther, without chick or chile, an' may curses come home to that wicked one, Mistress Martha Kerruish."

Michael rode on calling out to the woman: "We'll be seeing thee at the house, Pyee."

"Ay! Masther," she replied.

§ ii

The story of the lawsuit between Michael Quilliam and Mistress Martha Kerruish was in this wise. A dozen years ago or so, when Michael was courting Kitty Christane of Ballasalla, he began to build the big stone house at Derby-haven for his bride. A fine, well-featured Manx man with a blue eye, a ruddy countenance and a habit of command, was Michael; and Mistress Kerruish, the owner of the adjoining estate, fell in love with him. "Kitty Christane shall never set foot in Michael Quilliam's house," she said boastfully, as she drew herself up and painted her lips scarlet. A handsome young widow was Mistress Kerruish; she could

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

paint her face and powder her curls with the best of them ; not that she had much opportunity in Derbyhaven of displaying her finery ; but Mistress Kerruish had travelled across the water, and knew the theatres and tea-gardens of Liverpool and London.

Michael remained indifferent to her wiles, and in due time he married Kitty Christane of Ballasalla. The young couple began life together in the square limestone house at Derbyhaven long before it was finished ; for people builded slowly in those days with the limestone that lay about the shore, and timber from Norway, which had to be fetched in Michael's ships. Two or three rooms were enough for Michael and Kitty in the early days. "What for art thou building so big a house, lad ?" his neighbours would ask, and Michael would reply with a twinkle, "For the big family that's to live in it, of course."

Mistress Kerruish ate her heart out with envy, when she saw the handsome couple at Kirk Malew Church on Sundays, as she sat in her square pew alone scheming how she could injure them. She even went to the length of consulting the wise woman at Balladoole as to the method of dealing with one's enemies ; and in accordance with the wise one's instructions, she collected four packets of dust from the cross-four-roads, and kneaded it with melted bees-wax into a rough image of Kitty. She roasted this image before the fire, she stuck pins into it, and otherwise maltreated it ; but Kitty continued to flourish. It is true that she contrived to annoy Kitty and Michael in numberless ways. She spread the land adjoining Kitty's cherished rose garden with stinking fish for manure. She kept pigs near Kitty's parlour window, and in hot weather the styes were never cleaned ; she had a pig killed on the shore before Kitty's window, when

THE LAWSUIT

Kitty had company to tea. Kitty complained bitterly to Michael.

"Take no heed, girl," he said, "she is a crooked and cross-grained female."

"She's got such big feet, Michael," sobbed Kitty, "and she paints her face like a woman of sin."

At last Mistress Kerruish bethought herself to build a wall right against the south gable of Michael's house continuing down to the sea-shore, and at the back to the Croft Gate. She exceeded her own boundary by six feet, and she built the wall eighteen feet high, and three feet thick, of the grey limestone on the shore.

Michael added another storey to his house to overlook the wall; but Mistress Martha increased the height of the wall.

"The wall darkens the front parlour," wept Kitty.

"It keeps off the blighting sou'-western winds," comforted Michael.

"I can no longer see the Fort Island as I lie in my bed," sobbed Kitty.

"Thou canst see the stars and the sea," affirmed Michael.

For many weary months the dispute concerning the boundary dragged on in the slow, dilatory Manx way, until it was decided in favour of Mistress Martha Kerruish.

§ iii

The day Michael was at the law-court was a busy day with Kitty Quilliam; but September was always a busy month, as it was perhaps the loveliest month of the year. Kitty was not very conscious of the beauty of her surround-

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

ings ; she had seen none other. She accepted it ; for was not the heather always purple, the fuchsia hedges a-dangling with crimson drops, and the sea blue as the harebell by the roadside, early in September ? She was glad the weather was settled for the harvest ; but she was anxious about the lawsuit and her mind was running on domestic matters. She had set her two maids, Susan and Judy, early in the day, to empty the feather beds, one by one in the big attic, and to tease out the feathers until each was separate. The seams of the tick had to be soaped with good yellow soap, and the feathers replaced ; thus, making a fresh bed for the winter, light and comforting in its softness ; for she held that there is no comfort on earth equal to the comfort of a new feather bed, made with the feathers from the breast of a goose. Then Pete had come in from Santon with big baskets of mushrooms ; and Judy was called from the attic, with goose-feathers sticking all over her curly hair, to peel and prepare the mushrooms for making ketchup, keeping back the finest to fry with ham and eggs for the master's supper. " It's weary he'll be after the business of the court," she said, " and pray God he may win the lawsuit." After the twelve o'clock dinner of potatoes, herrings and buttermilk, with big rice puddings, Kitty sent five of her children to Grandmamma Quilliam who lived in the adjoining cottage, Dorcas, Rosaleen, Matthew, Patience and Bride, for their daily lessons. Her baby girl, Faith, was in charge of Phrancis Parr, who sat sewing in the back parlour, where the sun and the fragrance of the garden poured in through the open window. The garden was a tangle of fuchsia, veronica, roses, pinks, bergamot, catmint, woodruff, tall mulleins, gooseberry bushes and pear-trees. Kitty was convinced that sunlight and the scent of flowers kept the baby safe from bad fairies ;

THE LAWSUIT

for the fear of evil spirits lingered in spite of the *tramman* (elder) trees in every garden, and the fires which were kept burning all the year round, to scare away evil spirits and witches.

Kitty in the front kitchen was making the ketchup, when Danny Kinvig arrived with the winter stock of herrings, fine silvery fish, their scales glistening in the sun. Kitty ran down the broad gravel path to the gate to look at them.

"A couple of maze, Misthress," said Danny, "an' the finest fish on the Islan'."

"Where are they from, Danny?"

"From Port Iron way, ma'am, but it's fine herrings they are, an' cheap, aw bless me! the cheap they are to-day."

"You must stay awile, Danny, to give the girls a hand with the gutting and the salting."

"Av' coorse, av' coorse," assented Danny, affably.

He helped Susan to gut and wash the fish, in the sea, which lay beyond the gate; for no herring in the world can retain its delicate individual flavour if it is ever touched by fresh water.

Danny gutted the herrings with a turn of the wrist, so to speak, and flung them to Susan, who threw them into the big baskets after washing them in the sea-water. Kitty stood at the gate watching them. Hundreds of gulls circled round the fish-washers on the beach, screaming, and diving after the entrails which were cast into the sea. Susan, a rosy maid, with blue eyes and raven hair, a short skirt, stout legs clad in scarlet stockings, a blue bedgown and a neat mob-cap, was struggling up from the shore with a basket of cleaned fish. At every step she was buffeted by the gulls screaming around her; and behind her the sun shone on the golden waters. As she emerged from the shore, in a long shaft

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

of golden sunlight, Kitty reflected, "She looks like the picture of a saint coming up from the sea, in Biddy Malone's Roman Catholic book of saints."

The same idea occurred to old Mrs. Quilliam as she looked from her parlour window upon the scene. "Only for her red stockings the girl would look like a saint," she thought; and certain it is that the primitive labours, which keep people close to the earth and sea, are more poetic than all the buying and selling in the markets.

"Have a care, Susan," called Kitty, "there's a good herring gone now," as a bold gull swooped down, snatched a herring from the basket, and bore it aloft.

The fish were laid on clean straw on the barn floor, when Pyee appeared.

"Good evenin', Misthress," she said.

"Good evenin', an' how's thyself this long time, Pyee?"

"Middlin', Misthress, it's a bit of a coul' I've got, but I'm not complainin' at all."

"Go thou in, Pyee, an' get a cup of tea; glad we'll be of thy help with the herrings, the feather beds, and the candles to be dipped an' all."

"Ay, Misthress, the Masther is on the way. It's beyond the Big Cellar he stopped, to talk with Masther Quine."

"You shall tell me the newses after supper, Pyee."

"Yis," said Pyee, "there's plenty of newses, ma'am, when a body gets about the country."

The maids were throwing coarse salt upon the herrings; and Pyee was turning them over with a stick, when Patience peeped in.

"There's a fine hape of herrings, anyway," said Pyee.

"Did you see any witches on Barrule, Pyee?" asked Patience.

THE LAWSUIT

"Never a one then," said Pyee. "Aw! but the very spit she is of ould Misthress Quilliam."

"Indeed I'm not," contradicted Patience. "I'm all Manx; it is Bride that is English, like Grandmamma."

"Listen to that now, 'tis a good thing to be Manx, the black English are robbers, so they are."

"What have they stolen, Pyee?" asked the child.

"'Tis the Isle of Man itself they stole."

"They did so," interposed Judy, with a handful of salt in her hand, "but ould Madame Quilliam says the English paid for it."

"Paid, did they?" quoth Pyee, and she recited in a curious sing-song:—

"All the babes unborn will rue the day
That the Isle of Man was sold away,
For there's ne'er an old wife that loves a dram
But will lament for the Isle of Man."

"Paid, did they, and made slaves of us all?"

"How slaves?" asked Patience.

"Slaves sure enough *chree*,* a fine place was the Islan' in them days, a land flowin' with milk an' honey, so it was. A fat goose could be got for a groat, eggs twelve a penny, an' brandy and sperrits for nawthin'! Them were the good ould smugglin' days."

"Smuggling," said Patience, "is wicked."

"'Deed now," affirmed Pyee, "'twas a way of makin' a livin', an' poor folks must live; a better way it was than fishin' an' farmin', anyway."

* Term of endearment.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"It was so," said Judy. "Aw! the times I've heard me mother tell of the good ould days, when poor people had water barrels full of gin; an' the very bed ticks filled with the finest tay from China."

"Ay!" agreed Pyee, "an' the money folks was makin' in them days. The Islan' was like a garden, the beautiful it was before the black English tuk it."

"When will you be telling us stories of witches an' fairies." Asked the child?

"Wait, chile, till I've had me lil' drop of tay; the evenin's middlin' early yet."

"Will you be makin' cakes, Pyee?"

"Maybe, if the Misthress is willin'."

"Make a little one for me, Pyee, all my own," begged Patience, as she ran off.

"That chile 'ill lose nawthin', for want of askin'," quoth Pyee, "the perseverin' she is to be sure."

CHAPTER II

THE QUILLIAMS OF DERBYHAVEN

"I would not for any quantity of gold, part with the wonderful tales, which I have retained from my earliest childhood."—*Martin Luther.*

"The Phynnodderee went to the meadow
To lift the dew at grey cock-crow."

Old Song.

§i

KIRRY met Michael at the gate as he handed the mare to Pete.

"Have you won, Michael?" she asked.

"No, girl."

Tears of resentment filled Kitty's eyes and she was sobbing as they turned up the gravel path to the house.

"Hush, Kitty," said Michael, patting her shoulders.

"You shall have the fine silk gown for all."

"No, Michael, no," sobbed Kitty, "it isn't the gown I'm wantin' now."

"Indeed! Yes then, and to-morrow we'll go to Douglas to choose the silk."

"'Tis shameful, so 'tis," wept Kitty, "and the Deemster misguided by that wicked woman, with her presents and her painted face."

"Nay," comforted Michael, "that little bit of land is no use at all."

"It would make a fine border for flowers then and bee-hives."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"And facing north it is, nothing would grow there in a border."

"But the wall, Michael, it hides the view from the best parlour and the sun."

"You get all the morning sun, Kitty, and the wall is a good wall, a fine big one anyway. It keeps the bitter wind away. Glad enough you'll be of it, when 'tis covered up with fuchsias, ivy and a tramman tree or two covering the wall down to the gate. It 'ill be as nice as nice," coaxed Michael.

It is a characteristic of the Manx folk never to acknowledge defeat; and the wall had now become to Michael one of the chief attractions of his house. "If Mistress Kerruish hadn't built the wall I'd have had to do it myself anyway," he concluded cheerfully.

Kitty eyed the wall doubtfully. "Will the fuchsia grow right up to the top?" she asked.

"That it will," he said, "look at the shelter there'll be."

"And when will it be covered?" asked Kitty, looking at the vast expanse of the big wall.

"When you and I are old and the children are grown," he said soberly.

Just then Patience ran up to him. "What have you got for us, Dadda?" she coaxed.

"A parcel of nobs," he said, handing to the little girl the old-fashioned toffee-nobs.

"You must share with the others, Patience," warned her mother, "six equal portions now, and Dorcas had better do the sharing."

"Dorcas is with grandmamma," pouted Patience.

"Then I'll share them myself," said Kitty.

THE QUILLIAMS OF DERBYHAVEN

"Baby can't eat nobbs," objected Patience, "she'll not want a share."

"Don't be greedy, Patience. We must save a share for Dinah."

Patience's face fell. "Dinah gets lots of things at granny's that we don't get," she said.

But her mother did not heed her comment. "Go now to grandmamma, tell her that Dadda is at home and the children must come to tea."

There were seven children, but Dinah the eldest lived with Granny Christane at Ballasalla, where she had gone when Dorcas was born, because she had mumps. She became such a favourite with her granny and aunts that she had never returned home.

"I must take Patience to Ballasalla to-morrow," said Kitty over the tea-table. "Molly is making a frock for the child, and she wants to fit it on."

"We are going to Douglas to-morrow afternoon, to buy the silk gown, now the lawsuit is ended," insisted Michael.

"Indeed now, there's so much to do, Michael, with the herrings to pack, the feather beds to finish, and the candles to be dipped, I've no time."

"Pyee is here, she will give a hand," suggested Michael.

"There's no person to look after the children," said Kitty.

"Now look here, Kitty. You take Patience to Ballasalla in the morning and leave the child there, and I'll come for you at two o'clock and we'll drive on to Douglas."

"I cannot leave the children the length of the day, Michael, it's mischief they'll be gettin' in, especially Matthew, the naughty boy."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Send them to mother. She'll teach them, and Matthew can con his Latin."

"What is Latin, dad-da?" asked little Bride.

"'Tis a dead language, child."

"Why is it dead?"

"Because people no longer speak it. Come, Matthew, tell your little sister some of your Latin."

Matthew looked over his bowl with round, blue eyes, he fumbled despondingly with the marbles in his pocket, and began blunderingly, "Pater-noster, Pater-noster, I don't know the rest."

"I can say it, dad-da," said Bride eagerly; and the astonishing child repeated more than half of the Lord's prayer in grandmamma's quaint Latin.

"How do you come to know it?" asked the amazed Michael.

"I heard grandmother trying to teach Matthew."

"Did you ever hear the like?" cried the gratified mother with pride.

"I don't want to learn Latin at all," proclaimed Matthew. "I'm going to be a blacksmith, and Johnny-Juan at the forge knows no Latin."

"Fie for shame, Matthew, be a good boy now and learn all you can," said his mother.

§ ii

Michael was smoking his pipe in the big front kitchen; Kitty was hushing baby Faith to sleep, while Phrancis Parr arranged the pieces of patchwork for the soft cushion Dorcas was making. Into the back kitchen with the wide

THE QUILLIAMS OF DERBYHAVEN

fireplace, the turf fire, the hams hung in the chimney to be smoked, the floor of hardened earth, crept Rosaleen, Matthew, Patience and Bride. They had been sent to bed ; but had resisted being undressed, and returned to hear stories. On the round table were bowls of tea, with a "little sup of rum" for Pyee, a smoking dish of herrings, and a heap of griddle cakes. Around the table were seated Susan, Pete and Pyee, while Judy stood at the fire with a goose's wing in her hand dusting the griddle with it, preparatory to placing on it the last cake.

"This lil' drop of tay is good for me coul'," Pyee was saying, "an' the herrings is nice too, jus' another bit of soda bread, Susan girl, an' I'm finished. Aw! bless me, here's the childer."

"We want to hear the story of the Phynnodderee, Pyee," cried Patience.

"And the Phynnodderee of the glen waddling
To throw thee like a lobster against the wall"—

shouted Matthew.

"Whist, whist, child; the Misthress will hear ye."

"Tell us about the good Phynnodderee, Pyee," pleaded little Bride.

Pyee seated herself on a stool in the chimney corner, filled her old black pipe, and the children grouped around her. She began: "He wasn't a bad sperrit at all; nor a fairy exactly, for the Phynnodderee had no bad *arrim** at all like the witches. He was a friend to the farmers, an' many's the time he would come at the dead of night and gather the

* At him.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

harvest, or clean out the stables. Aw ! a hardworking body was the Phynnodderee.”

“ Did you ever see him, Pyee ? ” asked Matthew.

“ Never a sight, nor nobody else. Aw ! the shy he was. When folks peeped from the window to get a sight of him, he’d be off like the wind, an’ never come near them again. He was simple, too, the soul ! for folks said he could never tell which was a sheep and which a rabbit. A *toot* of a thing (foolish thing) he was. But the crathur had no clothes at all ; an’ a farmer was pityin’ him, for he’d built a house for the farmer all in one night, so he had.”

“ With stone and a roof ? ” Patience asked.

“ Maybe ’twas, chile, but I’m thinkin’ it would be a turf an’ mud house with a bit of a thatch of heather an’ ling, but anyway ’twas a merricle to do it all in one night, an’ only the Phynnodderee could do it. So the farmer wanted to be kind to the crathur an’ he made a warm coat of Manx wool, an’ a fine pair of breeches an’ a cap for him.”

“ How did the farmer get his measure ? ” asked Matthew.

“ He just guessed it, chile, and he took the clothes down Santon way, where the Phynnodderee had his home.”

“ What was his home like ? ” asked Rosaleen.

“ ’Twas deep down in a cove, by a rushin’ stream, a lovely place it was, overhung with a tramman tree, an’ white pebbles on the shore, an’ white sand, an’ that’s where the crathur was livin’. The man hid near-by to see the joy of the Phynnodderee. Then out of the cove he came ; an’ he took each thing an’ looked at it, knowin’ like, an’ said :—

“ ‘ Cap for the head, bad for the head,
Coat for the back, bad for the back,
Breeches for the breech, bad for the breech.’ ”

THE QUILLIAMS OF DERBYHAVEN

"An' he threw them all down, an' sighed a deep sigh, an' away with him on the breath of the wind. An' was never seen again."

"But nobody had ever seen him at all, you said," objected little Bride.

"Hark at that now!" said Pyee. "No, *villish*,* nobody had ever seen him but that one farmer."

"Me an' Pete will go to Santon an' look for that cove," said Matthew, valiantly.

Pete looked up. "There's lots of queer things goin' at Santon," he said. "A sailor man was drowned there from a ship. Spanish it was, an' the man was never buried at all; an' he could not rest anyway. An' if you go to Santon river at midnight on the 9th of October, the man comes to you. A lil' man he is, in funny clothes, an' a shiny sailor hat, rings in his ears; an' in his hands a bundle wrapped up in blue cloth with white spots on it. An' the lil' man points out to the rocks an' cries as if askin' folks to find his body an' bury it."

A deep sigh of satisfaction followed this recital, only little Bride paled and put her fingers in her ears to shut out the gruesome tale.

"Ay!" said Judy, "an' queer things enough on this beach, an' on the Fort Island across. In the lil' church there is hid a diamond necklace, worth thousan's of poun's. A sailor man stole it from a corpse an' he was wrecked on the Fort Island, an' he gave it to a priest there an' then he died, an' the priest buried it, an' then he died; an' nobody can find the necklace, an' the corpse comes on Easter Sunday lookin' for it."

* Term of endearment.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Was the little church ever a real church, an' not a ruin?" asked Rosaleen.

"Reel enough, *chree*, the blessed St. Patrick came an' then St. Michael, an' holy it was, until papists got hold of it, an' then it fell to ruins," said Pyee, sagely, for she had never heard that we were all papists once.

"Judy," called Kitty from the parlour, "are the children to bed yet?"

"Away with you now," cried Judy, and the children crept quietly up the stairs, Bride singing under her breath:—

"Phyn—nod—der—ee,
Come back to me,
And build a little house
To give to me,
Beside the sea,
Where 'tis quiet as a mouse."

"Who told you that?" asked Patience as Susan undressed them.

"Nobody," answered Bride, aged five. "I just thought of it."

"Don't tell stories," remarked Patience, virtuously.

"Susan," said Rosaleen, "could we find the diamond necklace?"

"I wouldn't try," said Susan. "It is cursed, so it is."

"I'm going to look for it," announced Patience, "and when I find it, I shall say prayers out of the Prayer Book over it, and then it will not be cursed."

"Don't go on Easter Sunday," warned Susan.

"Me and Rosaleen will go and look and look until we find it," persisted Patience with hope and avarice in her eyes.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA

“We have heaps of money to get corn and meat, yet priddhas* and herrings, they are our chief food.”

Manx Ballad.

§ i

GRANNY CHRISTANE lived at Ballasalla with her two daughters, Betty and Molly. She was a widow and farmed her land herself. Ballasalla is described in the old chronicles as “a neat village pleasantly situated.” It had a distinction of its own, for here in 1098 was founded the Abbey of St. Mary’s of Rushen. The abbot and his twelve monks lived an austere life, and set an example of hard work and self-denial to the Island. They wore neither skins, shoes, nor linen. They ate no fresh food, at least for a time. Later we learn they became indolent, proud and luxurious. Their lodgings became splendid, their meats delicate, their grounds spacious. Their orchards yielded the finest fruit, their river the sweetest fish. The Abbot became baron of the Island, and rivalled in magnificence and haughtiness the King himself. Pleasant enough was Ballasalla with its long straggling street, enlivened by traffic from various parts of the Island, its low white cottages, productive gardens, and little farms, once the fertile Abbey lands. Granny Christane had a finer abode than any of the neighbouring farms. Hers was a fine spacious house, with a well in the middle of the courtyard, or stackyard, barns for threshing and storing,

* Potatoes.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

and a big garden with a broad, straight walk right down the middle. Currant bushes alternated with bunches of pinks and china roses in the aged garden. It was a sunny, sheltered garden with plenty of potherbs and raspberry canes. The garden lay behind an old weaving shed shaded by trees. An earlier hand had planted these trees—apple trees, pear trees, with a scented lime to give it fragrance, and a walnut tree to add stateliness. It was surrounded by a stone fence and a fuchsia hedge. There were tramman trees, big bushes of veronica, and a riotous purple creeper, called the tee-plant, making its way everywhere. In spite of the Manx untidiness, for there were plenty of thistles and nettles near the weaving shed, it was a garden that was loved, and tended by careful hands, and it repaid the love by its plenteous offerings.

Mollie, Mrs. Christane's youngest daughter, toiled in the garden and loved every inch of it. This fine abode and garden came to be attached to the farm in this way. Some sixty years before our story opens, smuggling was the chief trade of the Island, and the men neglected their land and abandoned the fishing to engage in this illicit trade, and many grew rich and built fine houses. Those were rare days for the bold Manx smugglers; but the abundance of unexcised luxuries tended to debase the population, and drunkenness became a curse. When the British Crown purchased the Isle of Man smuggling was put down. Panic followed this change in the constitution. Bands of armed coastguards searched out large quantities of hidden goods. Riots and tumults followed. All trade stopped, many people were ruined, and rich merchants sold their houses for any price they could get and fled the country. It was then that Granny Christane's father-in-law bought the house for the price of a poor cottage, and the Christanes abode there ever since.

THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA

A masterful dame was Granny Christane, with that lust for dominion over her fellows which is characteristic of the half-educated. She was arrogant, too, brooking no rival authority; and she was full of complaints, snapping at grievances as a cat snaps at flies, for the Manx folks revel in small grievances. The day after the lawsuit, Granny Christane sat in a high old rocking-chair, counting her eggs, and laying them carefully in large baskets. Her indigo cotton gown, with a tiny red seaweed pattern straying over it, was covered with an ample apron. She wore a palpable brown front over her white hair, so palpable that one could see a piece of black tape instead of a parting; over this she wore a mob cap. On her nose was a pair of silver spectacles, through which peered her shrewd old eyes. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and glancing through the window she saw Pete from Derbyhaven enter the courtyard. "Come thy ways in, boy," she called to him, "ha'st got a message?"

"Ay, Místhress," said Pete, entering the big kitchen, "Místhress Quilliam with her daughter Patience be comin' to see thee this mornin', an' to have dinner with thee, for the Masther is goin' to Douglas."

"And the Místhress too?" she asked.

"Ay."

"What're they goin' to Douglas for?"

Pete looked vacant.

"When will they be startin' then?"

"At half-past two, likely," said the boy.

"An' what are they doin' to-day at Derbyhaven?"

"The herrin's is goin' saltin'."

"What person is helping?"

"Pyee from Barrule is there."

"And what 'ill the childer be doin'?"

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"The ould Místhress Quílliam be tachín' 'em."

"Go into the back kitchen, lad, and get a sup of buttermilk before thee goes back," she commanded.

"Betty," she called querulously, and her daughter obeyed the summons.

"Did you ever hear the like?" she said. "Here's Kitty with Patience coming to dinner to-day, and nought in the house but potatoes and herrin's and buttermilk."

"Yes," said Betty. "I'm fixing a frock for Patience."

"Kitty's going to Douglas, with Michael; 'tis about the lawsuit likely, but there's no call for Kitty to go at all."

"Maybe there's something she wants to buy, mother."

"Buy, indeed; it's well to be her to afford to buy, an' the lawsuit goin' a-losin'. Get thee a chicken killed, girl; a good fat one, an' we'll do it in the elegant way Mrs. Corrin was tellin' us. Masked, she called it, in thick sauce made with cream."

"You have to eat that cold, mother."

"Give me the cookery book, and go thou, and see the chicken is plucked, and then come to me."

When Betty returned Granny was full of information. She eyed the chicken critically. "We'll have it roast," she said, "an' stuffed with parsley an' bread stuffin', an' a sauce with mushrooms in it—that's the correctest thing to do; an' a blackberry pudden' with cream, there's a few ripe blackberries on the garden hedge."

"A lot of fuss you're makin' for juist Kitty," complained Betty.

"We can be as correct as Madam Quílliam," said Granny with an acid look. "Run, girl, and get Mrs. Cain, her that was kitchenmaid at the Governor's. She'll fix the dinner, an' Kitty shall see that if we haven't the larnin' of that fine

THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA

mother-in-law of hers, we can be as grand as the best."

Betty laughed heartily. "Yes, mother," she said.

"Let Mollie leave the churnin' now, and set one of the women at it, and send Mollie to me."

On the ground floor of the Christane household were two parlours, two kitchens and a large dairy, and here was Mollie, with her sleeves rolled up, at the plunging churn. "Leave the butter is it?" said Mollie in the soft Manx accent. "Dear me! how vexing."

Raven hair had Mollie, growing low in a peak on her white forehead. Sea-blue eyes with a flicker of fun in them, cheeks like a sun-ripened peach. Serious and beautiful was Mollie, and demure as a Puritan maid. She was unadorned as the unclouded sky, and just as perfect; ornament can cover up flaws, but the unadorned have to depend on perfection in order to be beautiful. Her gown was a plain brown print, cut square in front, showing her white neck; and her hair was covered with a mob cap.

"Yes, mother," said Mollie, discarding her churning apron, splashed with milk.

"Kitty is comin' to dinner with Patience. Set out the table in the large parlour with the white damask cloth, and the Liverpool dinner set. Put salt in the glass salt mugs, and the best knives and forks."

"Yes, mother, but Kitty 'ill not be wantin' this fuss at all."

"'Tis I who want it, just to show Kitty that all the grandeur is not in Derbyhaven. Polish thou the silver spoons and set out tea on the side table. Kitty 'ill be glad enough of a cup, before her long drive."

"Yes, mother."

"Get me my best cap and mittens, and then run thou to

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the school and fetch Dinah. Put the fine white stockings on her, the slippers with sandals, and the muslin gown, and the frilled pantaloons. Curl the child's hair and let me see her before Kitty comes."

At eleven o'clock everything was ready, a fragrance of roasting chicken and boiling ham scented the air, and Granny Christane sat in the parlour reading the Bible, with a clean handkerchief folded on her lap enclosing a sprig of bergamot and a bit of lavender from the garden.

§ ii

Mollie went to the top of the house to look from the attic window across the fields to Derbyhaven. "They are coming, Betty," she called, and Betty put the pot of potatoes on the fire. "All will be ready in half an hour," she said to the ex-kitchenmaid of the Governor.

"Come thou to me, Dinah, and let Granny see thee," called the old lady; and Dinah, a straight child of eleven, Kitty's eldest daughter, escaped from Aunt Mollie and ran to her Granny.

"Stand farther away, child, where I can see thee right." Dinah stood in the window.

"Aunt Mollie curled me hair, Granny, and hooked me frock."

Granny eyed her critically through her round silver spectacles, but said not a word.

"Amn't I nice, Granny?"

"Middlin', child, just middlin'," said Granny, who in reality was bursting with pride at the appearance of her favourite grandchild. "Sit thee still now, like a little lady,

THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA

an' don't be goin' an' playin' in the garden with Patience, to soil thy pretty clothes."

Mollie ran to the door to greet her sister. "Kitty," she said, "you'll be wearied in this heat."

"'Deed I am so, Mollie, with this lawsuit goin' awry too, 'tis harassed I am."

Mollie kissed Patience. "Go, *villish*, and kiss Granny and Dinah. Oh, Kitty! I'm sorry that Michael has lost."

"Well, Kitty, thou'rt hot, girl," was her mother's greeting. "Take thee hat off thee head."

"Michael's lost the suit," began Kitty, weeping. "'Tis shameful, so it is, an' Michael's to pay poun's an' poun's an' costs an' all."

"What call had he to go to law about that bould slut of a woman? It's makin' a *gorm* of himself he is over it," said her mother dourly.

Kitty was on the defensive in a moment. "She stole our land; and the big *stball* of a woman that she is, was just crazed in love with Michael."

"Ay!" said Granny, "and maybe the man encouraged her. 'Millish dy ghaoill, agh sharro dy eeck' (Sweet to take, but bitter to pay*).

Kitty became scarlet. "How dare you say so of my Michael?" she stormed. "It is wicked tales you've been listening to."

"Scorned in love ever makes a woman sour," went on Mrs. Christane, "an' a poor *drollane* (indolent) of a woman she is to be sure. What could Michael see in her at all?"

"He didn't," stormed Kitty. "Mother, how can you think wicked lies of Michael?"

* Manx proverb.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"God forbid," said her mother, "but Michael is only a man for all. I'm hearin' it's Lawyer Kissack the woman had."

"Yes," wept Kitty, "a walking murrain of a man he is."

"Ay! a sour man, with a sour mouth at him, a sniggerin' mouth, with never a plain 'yea or nay,' a bad man to deal with."

"And she sent presents to the Deemster, too," lamented Kitty.

"Ay! the Deemster's hand is maybe bigger than his power of judgin'," muttered the old woman.

Meanwhile Patience stood alone in the parlour, waiting for Dinah, and watching the weathercock on the mantel-piece. For fine weather out came a lady in a large crinoline, and for stormy weather a gentleman in a wig appeared. Patience hoped Dinah would admire her clean nankeen frock, her white socks, and cottage bonnet with a blue riband. She was conscious that her country-made shoes were dusty, but she hoped Dinah would not notice them.

Presently Dinah peeped round the door. "Good mornin', sister," she said, kissing Patience and eyeing her from head to foot. Patience put her finger in her mouth, and blushed, Dinah was so grand and aloof. Dinah patted her smooth curls, shook out the muslin of her frock, and adjusted the sandals of her slippers; then she glanced at her sister's dusty shoes and began to laugh. "What a sight you look, Patience, in those old yellow socks and clumsy shoes."

"They are white socks," protested Patience.

"Old ones washed yellow, and that thick nankeen, only fit for country children, from the top of Barrule."

Patience burst into tears, and sobbed aloud. Dinah's ridicule was very bitter. Somehow mortals are not made to

THE CHRISTANES OF BALLASALLA

live in amity. They are self-assertive, tactless, and always critical of each other, and this is particularly true of sisters. Kitty Quilliam came running in. "Why Patience, my pet, what is it then?" she asked.

Patience sobbed, and clutched her mother's gown. "Come with mother," went on Kitty.

"What ails the child, Dinah?" called Granny.

"Her shoes are dusty," said Dinah, with crimson cheeks, "and I said so."

"Don't tease your little sister," said Granny sternly. "Now be a good girl, Patience, and don't cry like a baby. Sit thou by thy mother there."

Betty and Mollie in the big kitchen were dishing up the dinner.

"That *jousbag** of a woman has won then," said Betty; "the slut, casting her eye on Michael indeed."

"Poor soul," said Mollie, "she was always in love with him."

"The bould bad hussy, and Michael a married man. 'Tis ashamed she should be, instead of trying to harm Michael."

"There are lots of ways of showing love, but true love never harms," reflected Mollie.

"Thee seems to know all about love," jeered Betty.

"Perhaps I do, sister."

"If it's Lawyer Kameen that's thy teacher, 'tis lucky you are," and Betty laughed.

Laughter is a sure guide to character. We may control our features, soften our voices, govern our words, but we betray ourselves in laughter. Betty's laughter was hearty,

* Term of reproach.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

but there was an element of coarseness in it too. Mollie flushed.

"Betty," she said, "don't speak of Jude Kameen; I shall never think of him, never."

"That's a pity, the man is rich; an' if it's Stephen Fannin thou'rt blushin' for, 'tis a middlin' poor man he'll be, with only the farm, an' his mother to keep; an' not an old woman either, an' two sisters with shares in the farm, an' farmin's hard work enough, Mollie."

Mollie smiled and a kind of light from within illuminated her beautiful, serious face. "To be poor, to do hard work for the man you love, is nothing, Betty, nothing but joy, it is sure, to be able to show you love."

Betty laughed again. "A *toot* of a thing you always were, Mollie, with your mealy mouth. Love is well enough, but money is better."

"Love," she said, "is a gift from the Lord, and money itself never brings happiness."

"Thou'rt like the folks that go to the ranters' chapel with thy talk, Mollie, there's no sense in what they're sayin' at all."

"There's many a thing, Betty, for thee yet to learn," said Mollie quietly, and Betty laughed, a jeering laugh of scorn, and Mollie flushed to the roots of her hair.

CHAPTER IV

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

"Old Manx is waning,
She's dying in the tholthan."*

T. E. Brown.

§ i

"WHY, mother, what a grand dinner you've got," said Kitty.

"Thy mother-in-law is not the only body that knows how meat should be served. An' what's takin' thee to Douglas then?"

"Michael has lawyers to see, an' I've a new gown to buy."

"This isn't the time for new gowns an' the lawsuit goin' a losin'. What kind of a gown is it then?"

"Michael wants me to have silk," faltered Kitty.

"Silk indeed, it's fine to afford silk. Is it the Governor's lady or Bishop's wife thou'rt apeing?"

"Michael likes to see his wife well dressed, mother."

"Prices is shockin'. This print gown on me was five shillin's a yard; but Michael's a bit clicky at times. High notions at him like his grand English mother. Silk indeed!"

"Silk wears well," protested Kitty.

"Terrible high is silk in these days. Me mother used to say that before the English took the islan', there was times when silk could be got for nothin' almost."

"It's the duties the English is chargin'. Michael says that brandy is nine shillin's a gallon now; it's mostly duties."

* Ruined cottage.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"A shockin' price," grumbled her mother, "yet farmin' isn't so bad. The strangers is puttin' up prices. I'm gettin' fivepence a pound for me butter, an' sixpence a dozen for eggs, an' as much as two shillin's for a couple of good chickens."

"Farmin' isn't bad with them prices," agreed Kitty.

"Ay, in me gran'mother's day there was cheap prices," reflected Mrs. Christane. "Twelve eggs a penny, 'twas then. Chickens an' ducks thruppence each. Two good rabbits for one penny, an' the best lobster you'd wish, for three farthings; they was leather pennies in them days, an' the eagle an' child was comin' in."

"Why are eagles an' child's on pennies, Granny?" Patience wanted to know.

"'Twas the Stanley coat of arms, chile, an' Kings of Man they were in the ould days," and Granny recited in Manx:—

"Oh! I love well the Stanlagh name,
Though Roundies may abhor him.
Through the island, or over the sea
Or across the Channel with Stanley.
Come weal, and woe, we'll gather and go
And live and die with Stanley."

"What were Roundies, mother?" asked Kitty.

"A kind of soldier; folks thought nothin' of them in the island; but they was all for killin' Kings an' the like, an' they killed the great Stanley, so they did."

"What's the eagle doin' to the child?" Patience wanted to know.

"The eagle carried off the child; an' Sir Thomas Lathom an' his wife Isabella found it and brought it up, I've heard

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

me granny tell ; an' the daughter of that child married Stanley," recounted Granny.

"Tithes are wonderful high," remarked Kitty. "Michael is sayin' the farmers won't be payin' this new tithe of the Bishop's on turnips, at all."

"Deed, no," said her mother, "it's imposition, so it is, graspin' the Bishop is with his tithes."

"It's wonderful the number of strangers there is coming to th' islan'," said Kitty.

"An' the genteel Douglas is gettin'," agreed Betty. "Callin' th' ould White Lion Inn, The York Hotel, to sound grand for the strangers. Ould Mrs. Christian's daughter, her from Colby, keeps a house for strangers on the quay ; an' she was tellin' me, she'll get at times as much as ten shillin's a week jußt for two rooms," remarked Betty.

"Maybe," said Granny, "but there's many a body glad to give two rooms for five shillin's ; clane, decent rooms, too, good cookin' an' all. Ah ! the changes since I was a girl, the changes. Look at the good roads we've got now ; an' the farmers attendin' to the land and not neglectin' it for the fishin', and Castletown growin' astonishin'. Parson Quine was tellin' me there's three hundred houses in it now."

"Yes, mother," sighed Kitty, "if there was a nice school in Castletown for the girls, what a boon it would be. The islan' is shockin' badly off for schools."

"There's schools enough," stoutly maintained Mrs. Christane. "There's Mrs. Riggs in Athol Street, for genteel folks' children, and fit for the highest in the land ; then there's Mrs. Smythe's in Drumgold Street ; a mincin' lady-body is Mrs. Smythe ; common Smith her name was they're tellin' me, but she spells it Smythe, to be genteeler like."

"But I can't be sendin' the girls so far at all," reflected

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Kitty. "When they are older maybe I'll get a lodgin' for them in Douglas, an' the food for them goin' an' sending from home."

"There's no call for thy girls to go to Douglas at all; if they can read and caſt accounts, what more do they want? Thyself can teach them to ſew, to bake and brew."

Kitty ſighed. "Grandmamma is teaching Dorcas the French, and Matthew the Latin," ſhe ſaid. "Little Bride can ſay Latin aſtoniſhin'! She's as quick as a pet fairy."

"Latin! What's that at all?"

"'Tis a language, mother, a dead one, nobody ſpeaks it now."

Granny looked the contempt ſhe felt. "What uſe is it then to a body if nobody ſpeaks it?"

"But, mother, all the bettermoſt peoples' children learn Latin; the Governor's, the Biſhop's, an' all the Lords an' Dukes in England ſpeak it."

Granny twiſted her mouth into a wry ſmile. "Thy children, Kitty, are neither Dukes nor Biſhops nor Governor's children. 'Tis high notions thou'rt gettin' indeed. Let thy children learn the good Manx language. It was good enough for their grandfather, an honeſt man he was, an' a good farmer too. Madam Quilliam with her Latin indeed!" Granny tossed her old head and a bright ſparkle ſhone in her eyes.

"But, mother, Manx is dying out, and when my children will go to England, they will want to be like other people there."

"What call is there for thy children to go to England? Isn't the iſlan' good enough for them then? I never went to England, thou never went to England, no, nor yet thy grandmother nor great-grandmother."

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

"Michael has been to England then," affirmed Kitty proudly.

"Ay!" agreed the old woman dourly, "an' that fine mother-in-law of thine too."

"But, mother," pleaded Kitty, "there is no Manx literature at all; an' folks learn Latin to read the literature."

"What dost thou mean by literature? Printed books is it? An' haven't we a Manx Bible? The Bible, Kitty, is the grandest readin' in the world."

"But, mother, a Manxman didn't write the Bible at all."

"Don't make thyself ridiculous, Kitty, before the children too. God Himself wrote the Bible, an' Moses an' Paul an' the other holy men. 'Tis downright sinful to talk so. Literature, indeed! there's Manx Psalm-books an' Hymn-books, an' a Manx Prayer Book too, what more dost thee want?"

In a sense Granny Christane was right, for Manx is the language of a people who had few thoughts to express, and is as ill-fitted to make a literature, as Kitty was to espouse the cause of literature.

§ ii

"It's a fine dinner we've had, mother, and if everybody has finished, Patience shall say her nice grace for Granny," said Kitty, adjusting her bonnet strings. Patience, comforted by the good food, arose, carefully raised her hands and repeated:—

"Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Dinah sniggered slyly, and Aunt Betty laughed aloud.

"That's no grace at all, child," cried Granny. "'Tis heathenish stuff. I'll teach thee a right Manx grace, *Oltaghylurg*, that's the grace after meat, for a Christian child to say. Kitty, girl, teach the child proper."

"'Tis a very good grace, mother, written by a good poet," said Kitty, flushing.

"'Tisn't in the Bible, nor Prayer Book either, and no person can thank the Lord for good meat, without the Holy Books."

"It maybe in the hymn-book," said Kitty, hopefully.

"It isn't then," said her mother, "and the time's getting on. Go thou upstairs and fix thyself, then Mollie will give thee a nice cup of tea before the drive to Douglas. There is Michael coming sure enough. Hurry now. It's not right to keep the man waiting."

Betty attended her sister upstairs. "That's a fine Paisley shawl of yours," said Betty, fingering it, as the two ascended the stairs. "It must have cost a deal more money than mine."

"It did," replied Kitty, proud of her sister's admiration, "but it'll last me a lifetime. Mother seems fine and well."

"She's middlin' *granganagh* (peevish) at times, she wearies us."

"It's old she's getting," said the tolerant Kitty. "What for had you so grand a dinner to-day?"

"Just to show you and Patience how fine we can be."

"Jealous she is to be sure of Grandmamma Quilliam; well! it's potatoes an' herrin' she an' the children will be gettin' for dinner to-day."

"Well," laughed Betty. "It's on silver dishes she'll be puttin' the herrin's."

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

"She hasn't that many silver dishes at all," said Kitty.

"Hast got thy stock of herrin's yet?"

"Ay! an' a fine lot from Port Iron."

"So's mine; Danny Kinvig brought mine. Is Mr. Jude Kameen coming here much?"

"Mollie 'ill not speak to the man."

"It's a *foot* she is to be sure an' the man rich."

After Kitty had gone, Granny sat to her spinning wheel and Dinah got out her patchwork; while Mollie took Patience through the village to get a sitting of eggs. Dinah sat reflecting on her patches, if she only had some more pretty ones with pink roses on, and little green bits of seaweed on a blue ground. Aunt Mollie had some, she knew; she wondered where they were. Presently Granny dozed and the wheel was silent; and Dinah crept quietly to Aunt Mollie's room and in her table drawer found a bundle of prints. Dinah opened them, selected all the pretty pieces and carefully substituted her own uninteresting lilac patches; then stole downstairs and went on with her work. Looking out over the garden, she saw a gig against the fence, and Mr. Jude Kameen getting out and entering the stackyard. He approached the window and beckoned to Dinah. Granny still slumbered; and Dinah went quietly out to him. "Is your Aunt Mollie in?" he asked.

"No," replied Dinah.

"Where is she then?"

"She said I was never to tell you where she was."

"I'll give you this if you will," and he showed her a packet of sweets.

"She's gone to Gawn's farm, for a sittin' of eggs."

The sweets changed hands. "Now I want you to give this to your Aunt Mollie," and Jude Kameen produced from

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the depths of his gig a beautiful bouquet of such lovely flowers that Dinah stared in fascinated admiration. White, waxy flowers there were, purple heliotrope, white geraniums, maidenhair ferns, and hothouse roses.

"Oh," cried Dinah. "The beautiful they are, Mr. Kameen."

"Will you give them to Aunt Mollie with my love?"

"She won't have them," said Dinah regretfully. "I know she won't. She threw the others you gave me into the fire."

"Try her again," he coaxed.

"If she won't have them?"

"Keep them yourself then," he said crossly.

So Dinah took the flowers and hid them under her bed. Meanwhile Mollie and Patience passed over the ancient Abbey Bridge spanning the busy little river of clear water hurrying over the brown pebbles.

"See, Aunt Mollie, the big fishes," said Patience.

"They are trout," said Aunt Mollie. "We've a nice basket full at home, for you to take to Derbyhaven."

"I like trout better than herrings, Aunt Mollie."

"'Tis a more delicate fish, to be sure," said Mollie.

"See, Aunt Mollie, here is Mr. Jude Kameen coming in his gig."

"Let us get under this tree and hide," said Mollie quickly.

"I like Mr. Kameen," went on Patience. "He gives me nobs."

"He won't be having any with him to-day, Patience. Stoop down behind the bush."

And Mr. Kameen drove past slowly, searching the road with a roving eye.

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

"Grandmamma likes trout best, too. In England the people are not caring for herrings like the Manx."

"Yes, in England there's many a thing different. Look, Patience, *chree*; they are driving Tim Kewley's cows into the byre, and there's old Aggie, the wise woman from Balladoole."

Patience saw an old woman in a red linsey-woolsey petticoat, and faded green linen bedgown with a wide collar; and a green sun bonnet on her head.

"What is she going to do?" she asked.

"To take the spell off the cows! 'Tis bewitched they are and give no milk at all."

"How will she do it?"

"Ah! that I don't know, she's a fairy doctor, and can take off the spells put on by fairies and witches."

"Can we see her do it?" cried the excited Patience.

"Maybe; I'll just ask Mrs. Kewley."

But Aggie refused to have an audience.

"The lil' one will do no harm," she conceded. "Come, *villish*."

It was a trembling and excited Patience who presently found herself inside the byre, with the cows and the wise woman. Then the door was shut. The old woman made signs with her hands over the cows, then she said in Manx, in a slow crooning voice: "I am to command, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that the spell be taken off the innocent beasts and blown away as the sands of the sea."

Patience listened breathlessly, as she cowered into a corner far away from the wise woman of Balladoole.

"The poor bastes is well now, Místhress," said old Aggie, opening the door of the byre. "Milk them, Místhress,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

milk them." And sure enough the cows gave their usual supply of milk, and were cured from that moment. When Patience recounted this story at home, Grandmamma Quilliam said, "Some evil-minded person has milked the cows secretly. Nobody can bewitch their neighbour's cows."

But nobody believed her, for witch charms and written charms were powers in the Isle of Man, a century ago.

When Mollie and Patience returned with the eggs, Granny awoke from her slumbers and examined them. "Take them now, Mollie," she said, "an' put them under the grey hen, her that's broody."

And Mollie went into the hen barn followed by Dinah.

"If Mr. Kameen were to give you the beautifullest flowers, Aunt Mollie, what would you do with them?"

"I wouldn't take them," said Mollie shortly.

"But if he were to give them to me, Aunt Mollie?"

"You could do as you please."

"Well, he has given me the very beautifullest flowers there are, and I'll show them to you," and Dinah ran off to fetch them.

Mollie eyed them suspiciously. "I told him you wouldn't have them," said Dinah, "and he gave them to me."

The flowers were proudly displayed on the tea-table.

"Ay!" said Granny, sourly, "wasting good flowers on that child. Mollie, I'm ashamed of thee."

"Mr. Kameen," said Mollie, "can give flowers to Dinah if he chooses."

§ iii

Granny was going across the fields to drive her flock of geese home; and Patience was to go with her. "I'll see

A BUNDLE OF COTTONS

thee to the stile, child ; and then thou canst run home in five minutes along the shore."

"But first thee must sing 'Highland Mary' to us," declared Betty.

Patience was shy and hung her head. "I can't," she whispered.

"To be sure you can," said Granny, "thy mother told us thee hast a voice like a bird."

"I can't," said Patience, again her eyes filling.

"Sing it, pet," urged Mollie, "and I'll give you a nice doll."

Patience's tears fell thick. "Let Dinah recite 'Mary the Maid of the Mill,'" said Mollie kindly, "till the little one dries her tears."

Dinah with great promptitude did as she was desired.

"There now," said Granny, "sing 'Highland Mary' like a little lady."

Patience only hung her head and wept.

"She can't sing at all," declared Betty, hoping to goad the child into complying.

But the shy and bewildered Patience sobbed aloud.

"Naughty girl," scolded Granny. "See how nicely Dinah behaves," and Dinah tossed her curls and simpered over her patchwork.

"I want to go home," cried Patience in despair.

"Home is the best place for naughty girls," said Granny severely. "Put her bonnet on, Mollie, and give her the little basket of trout to carry, and home she shall go."

Mollie took the weeping child to her room and sponged her tear-stained face. "Don't thee cry," she begged, "see, Patience, here is a bundle of cottons to make pretty patchwork like Dinah's. I'll slip it in the basket and not show it to Granny. There, kiss me, pet, and stop crying."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Patience had revived wonderfully at the sight of the bundle of cottons. She had been envying Dinah's patchwork the whole afternoon. She grasped the basket and followed Granny down the lane ; and across the five big fields which lay between Ballasalla and Derbyhaven. The old woman, in her print gown, mob cap, little chequered shawl on her shoulders, and big stick, walked first, surveying her land ; and Patience, clutching her basket with her treasured cottons, followed. The distance was a good mile. The old woman collected her flock of geese in the last field, where the corn had been cut. "Now, Patience, child, kiss Granny, and get over the stile, and run home quick," said the old woman.

Patience obeyed cheerfully. She stood for a moment until Granny's back was turned, as she drove her geese homeward ; then she sat on the last step of the stile facing the sea and opened her bundle of cottons. But the tragedy of it ! Every piece was alike. Now the beauty of patchwork lay in the diversity of colours and patterns, and although Aunt Mollie had saved up a variety of patches for Patience, the perfidious Dinah had abstracted all the best patches, and left only the pale lilac ones. Patience burst into a passion of tears and wept as though her heart would break. Very real are the sorrows of children ; and of their depth and intensity their elders are too little aware.

CHAPTER V

A NEW SILK GOWN

“Wearing gowns made of silk,
And big caps of flax.
With ruffles on their necks
And short black mantles.”

Manx Ballad.

§ i

GRANDMAMMA QUILLIAM was a small lady, dignified and correct in speech, which correctness she strove to impart to her grandchildren; but Kitty's speech she wisely left alone. “She talks in the English way, that a body never rightly understands,” complained Granny Christane of old Mrs. Quilliam, “polite as you please, an' all the time despisin' a body. It's a wonder Kitty, poor girl, can put up with the like.” The Manx have always secretly hated the English, partly because the English owned their island, but chiefly on account of the English aloofness and conscious superiority. Grandmamma Quilliam was wholly English. Before her marriage she had been Dinah Jennings, granddaughter to one Sir Roger Jennings, and daughter to a poor country parson. Her youth had partly been spent in London, and she had seen with her own eyes, George III kiss his bride, when the couple arrived at Buckingham House. Dinah Jennings at her father's death came to the Isle of Man as governess to the children of the Bishop; and later, as she had hardly a relation in the world, she married Michael Quilliam of Ramsey, and it was their only child Michael who married Kitty Christane. In her widowhood, she elected to live near her son. Her house was a kind of annex

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

to the big house, and could be entered through a passage leading from the front kitchen. Grandmamma liked to live alone with her own belongings about her; books, silver, a few old miniatures, and some pieces of china from her English home. English people did not easily fall in with easy-going Manx ways in those days; the indifference towards books; the love of fine clothes; the interest in the affairs of one's neighbours; the homely food served without ceremony; the salt fish; the soda bread; the terrible procrastination that will leave a manure puddle before the door for years without attempting a remedy. "*Tra dy liooar*"* (Time enough) says the Manxman tolerantly. In her own heart Grandmamma hated Manx ways. The day Kitty went to Douglas, Grandmamma received her four grandchildren ceremoniously. Dorcas aged ten, Rosaleen aged eight, Matthew aged seven, and little Bride just five. She exacted a curtsy from the girls, and a bow from Matthew. Old Mrs. Quilliam wore a soft blue gown with a cream muslin fichu, edged with precious lace. There were fewer spurious imitations in those days of any kind; and those who wore lace at all, were sure to have it good. Her hair was white, escaping in little soft curls from beneath her cap. She wore a gold chain, and a signet ring which had belonged to her grandfather, Sir Roger Jennings. She treasured with passionate loyalty the old gentleman's spurs, his miniature, and a pair of silver candlesticks.

Dorcas was the spokeswoman. "Mamma said that dinner could be sent in to us here, if you wished, grandmamma."

"Certainly, my dear. What is there for dinner?"

* Manx proverb.

A NEW SILK GOWN

"Potatoes and herrings and currant pudding with butter-milk, grandmamma."

Mrs. Quilliam made a little face of distaste.

"We will make the best of it, my dear. Send Susan to me," and Susan came and received instructions, then the lessons began.

"Can I learn Latin, like Matthew?" petitioned Bride.

"Latin is for gentlemen, French for ladies. You shall learn French when you are old enough," said grandmamma.

"I don't want to be a gentleman and learn Latin," protested Matthew.

"Knowledge is power, Matthew."

"I don't want power," rebelled Matthew, "I want a big bellows like Johnny-Juan, and a hammer to make sparks fly."

"Hush, Matthew, you must do as you are told. You shall begin with Latin," and she read the Lord's Prayer aloud to him, requiring him to repeat it after her; then he had to copy it out laboriously in his copy book, with many blots and much anguish of spirit.

Dorcas was given a French exercise to write.

Then grandmamma required Rosaleen to repeat one of the cautionary stories from *The Cowslip*, which ran:—

"Miss Lydia Banks, though very young,
Will never do what's rude or wrong.
When spoken to she always tries
To give the most polite replies.

Some children when they write, we know
Their ink about them heedless throw;
But she, though young, has learned to think
That clothes look spoil'd with spots of ink."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Look at Matthew, grandmamma," she cried when the repetition was over. "He is making big blots."

"Little girls should not tell tales, my dear."

"But it is true," faltered Rosaleen.

"Little girls should speak when spoken to."

At this rebuff Rosaleen turned crimson and bent over her book.

"Now, my little Bride," said grandmamma, "bring me your primer; what are your reading, dear?"

"About the frog," said Bride, who sat primly on grandmamma's blue velvet stool, bending over a book.

Grandmamma took the book. "*Divine Emblems*, by John Bunyan," she read; "where did you get the book?"

"Granny Christane gave it to me for learning the Evening Hymn in Manx," and Bride folded her arms and began to repeat:—

"Gloyr hoods, my Yee, mish as daghtraa."

"Hush, my dear, I do not understand. Manx is not a language properly."

"There is a pretty picture of the frog and the bulrushes," went on little Bride, "but the poetry is not pretty; hear me say it," and the child repeated with quaint pronunciation of the longer words:—

"The Frog by nature is both damp and cold,
Her mouth is large, her belly much will hold;
She sits somewhat ascending, loves to be
Croaking in gardens, tho' unpleasantly."

Grandmamma was astounded. She did not know the child could read. She had industriously kept her learning

A NEW SILK GOWN

ab, eb, ib, ob, ub, ba, be, bi, bo, bu, and making strokes and pothooks on her slate.

"Has anybody ever read this verse to you?"

"No, grandmamma."

The other children listened. "Isn't it rude to say belly?" Rosaleen asked.

"It is not a pretty word for a little girl, but it was written by a good man."

"Frogs don't croak," commented Matthew, "not when you hit 'em with a stone, they don't."

"Go on with your work, Matthew. Come here, Bride. Can you read 'The Comparison'?"

"Yes," said the child, "but I don't know what all the words mean," and she read:—

"The hypocrite is like unto this frog;
As like as is the puppy to the dog,
He is by nature cold, his mouth is wide
To prate and at true goodness to deride.
And though he seeks in churches for to croak,
He neither loveth Jesus nor his yoke."

"What's a yoke, grandmamma?"

"The top part of mamma's nightgown," volunteered Rosaleen.

"Allow me to speak for myself, Rosaleen. A yoke, my dear, is a burden. Who taught you to read, Bride?"

"Nobody taught me. It is quite easy," said Bride.

"Dorcas, how long has Bride been able to read?"

"A long time; she always reads our books."

"Who taught her, Dorcas?"

"She watched Patience and Rosaleen being taught," said Dorcas.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Come here, Bride, and read this," and grandmamma opened *Æsop's Fables* at "The Wolf and the Lamb."

Bride read it through obediently.

"Why did you not tell me you could read, instead of learning the syllables in the Primer, Bride?"

The child did not know. She had obeyed her grandmamma without question. The old lady watched her with a puzzled frown. She did not know that there are supernatural children, who only want to be left alone, and are only irked and hindered by formal instruction. Patience always said that Bride told stories, and even her mother sometimes lamented her child's untruths, for this is a hard world for the over-intelligent.

At half-past eleven grandmamma took Dorcas with her to prepare the midday meal. She took the boiled herrings and potatoes in their skins from Susan and surveyed the unpromising material. She peeled and mashed the potatoes with a little cream and butter, and placed them in a china dish. The herrings she boned, flaked, and placed on a silver dish garnished with lettuce, and she covered the fish with a hastily mixed mayonnaise of eggs, cream, and vinegar. The currant pudding was put into a glass dish, sprinkled with white sugar and decorated with little pieces of preserved ginger. Even the buttermilk appeared a more lordly beverage when served in a glass jug with glass goblets to drink out of.

Dorcas looked on with admiration. "Always serve food daintily," admonished the old lady. "Now let us spread the cloth."

The table was laid, and it shone with silver spoons and forks, glass, and a rose bowl filled with cottage roses and sprigs of lavender. Bride surveyed it with satisfaction.

A NEW SILK GOWN

"Pretty things help you to be good, don't they, grand-mamma?" she said.

"Yes," replied the old lady, looking curiously at her.

The children, freshly washed, sat to the table, and grand-mamma said a Latin grace, which her father had learnt at Oxford. Matthew was deeply impressed. "Does the Governor eat potatoes and herrings this way?" he asked.

"All gentlemen eat this way, Matthew."

"Then," said Matthew solemnly, "I shall be a gentleman blacksmith."

§ ii

"Just drive along Athol Street, Michael," pleaded Kitty, "'tis elegant the houses are there, and I want to see Mrs. Skillicorn's curtains; they are real silk brocade, I'm hearing; drive slow now, I want to have a good look." Michael obeyed and turned away from the old quay bustling with life. Women selling fish, sailors, carriages and farmers' carts thronged the streets; and he drove through tortuous alleys, narrow, cobbled and dirty, to the spacious Athol Street with its fine, tall houses, comfortable and handsome. Douglas, the chief town of the Isle of Man, was a curious congeries of houses, many of them miserable hovels. There were no flagged footpaths for passengers; no lamps at night; no police to demand street cleanliness. Kitty admired Athol Street greatly. "It has houses just like those in the grand London squares," said Kitty, "and ladies going to parties at night in sedan chairs as grand as you please. Now, Michael, let us drive and look at Douglas Bay and Castle Mona, before I go to Miss Fitzsimmons' to ask her about the fashions." It was indeed a magnificent bay forming a

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

semicircle of more than three miles. A wide low-lying bay with soft headlands broken into little coves, with huddled houses, clustering down the hill to the beach. It was a glorious, glistening day, with the blue sea rolling in softly and languidly. Douglas was very beautiful, with the green hills behind the bay, the white cottages scattered like grains of corn, and here and there gentlemen's mansions hiding among the trees. Castle Mona, the residence of the Duke of Athol, was undergoing repairs, and Kitty gazed at it in the distance with pride.

"It's a little court, Douglas is, when the Duke is here," she said.

"Where will you go now, Kitty?" asked her husband.

"I'll be going to Miss Fitzsimmons' first, and then to Spence's to buy the silk."

"I'll put up at Mrs. Corkill's, then, and you can meet me for tea before we start home."

"But I want you to see the silk first, Michael."

"What pleases you will please me."

"I'll get patterns to show you then, and you shall choose."

Miss Fitzsimmons, milliner and dressmaker, had a little shop in Dukes' Lane. A funny little shop, very old and rather tumble-down in appearance. The shop was dark and gloomy, and you went down two steps from the street to enter it. The interior was enlivened by an immense straw bonnet which was made in the apprentice days of Miss Ann Fitzsimmons, and exhibited as a sample of her skill. There were also shelves full of bandboxes, and drawers full of ribbons. In the parlour behind the shop sat Miss Fitzsimmons with her two apprentices and worked. She was a small, faded little woman with a glass eye, a pale face, corkscrew curls, and a pretty cleft chin. Kitty poured forth

A NEW SILK GOWN

her requirements. "Now tell me the latest fashions in silks," she said.

Miss Fitzsimmons cogitated. "A good durable *gros de Naples* silk is what you want, Mrs. Quilliam, either garnet-coloured or cinnamon-brown. Nile-green satin is very fashionable in London, but it isn't as if you want to go to fashionable assemblies, is it? You want a sober, rich gown for church, christenings, visiting, and the like."

"Yes," agreed the enraptured Kitty, "that's what I do want. Stylish and elegant, but quiet and ladylike."

Miss Fitzsimmons placed some fashion plates before the excited Kitty. "I recommend," she said solemnly, "garnet silk, quite a dark garnet you know, or a dark amethyst, made with a deep hem, and full skirt, so that it will fall in rich folds. The bodice quite plain and a high neck, with a notched collar of silk to give fullness, and perhaps a narrow blond frill against the neck. The sleeves very wide *à la Donna Maria*, drawn in at the wrists."

"Very elegant and suitable," agreed the delighted Kitty.

"Examine all the latest silks at Spence's," cautioned Miss Fitzsimmons, "but choose the best garnet or amethyst they have got."

Fluttered and happy, Kitty tripped off to Spence's and spent an exciting ten minutes in gazing at the newest silks. Mr. Spence himself exhibited them. "Fine quality it is, Mrs. Quilliam," he said, fingering the cinnamon brown, "'twill last a lifetime, and stand by itself, it's that stiff."

"The garnet is a lovely colour, but rather red," said Kitty, "and when I'm hot, I get that red, that it might ill-become me."

"Nothing would ill-become you, Mrs. Quilliam," remarked the gallant Mr. Spence, "but here is a softer shade,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

more like a lilac in bloom on a spring day. It's amethyst they're calling it."

"It's lovely," said Kitty, touching it, "so elegant, so ladylike. Would it take the dirt, Mr. Spence?"

"Look at the lustre it's got; there's too much shine for any dirt to stick on that surface. And aw! the fashionable it is! This very quality is worn by the ladies at Windsor Castle."

"Is that so?" said the delighted Kitty, "and will it fade at all?"

"No fade in it, Mrs. Quilliam, m'am, take my word for it. That silk 'ill become you ter'ble well."

"Just give me a little pattern, Mr. Spence, to show my husband, and a scrap of the cinnamon-brown too. Michael is very partial to brown for a married lady." The obliging Mr. Spence complied. "It's not much of it I've got, Mrs. Quilliam, and if her Grace the Duchess were to see it, she'd snap it up like a shot."

"When's she coming to the island?" asked Kitty.

Mr. Spence shook his head. "It's drains they are making at Castle Mona now. She didn't like the puddles in the back-yards, nor the manure heaps either."

"It's finikin' these people from the other side are," remarked Kitty, as she went off with her patterns.

Mrs. Corkill had a nice tea awaiting them, with ham and eggs and griddle cakes. Kitty was too happy to eat. "Which colour do you like best, Michael?" she said, displaying the patterns.

"I like them both," Michael replied stolidly.

"But for a best gown, Michael, a real grand one with a wide skirt, and wide sleeves, Maria something they call them, made like the gowns the ladies wear in carriages

A NEW SILK GOWN

in London. It will be for church on a fine day, and would come in for weddings, christenings, an' the like."

"There's more colour about this," said Michael, indicating the amethyst silk, "and you always like a bit of colour."

So it was decided, and Michael went with her to buy it, and Mr. Spence sent his errand boy with it at once to Miss Fitzsimmons. "It 'ill make a gown fit for a lady, that it will," cried Miss Fitzsimmons, as she handled it professionally.

"See the shine on it, Michael, and the stiff it is," said Kitty.

"And the rich folds it makes by itself," remarked Miss Fitzsimmons, displaying it.

"It's too grand altogether you'll be, Kitty, for the like of me," opined Michael.

And the two ladies laughed merrily at his wit.

"You'll want a hat to go with that gown, Mrs. Quilliam," said the dressmaker.

"I could never afford one," said the regretful Kitty.

"I'll make it cheap. Amethyst satin now, with bows of jonquil silk with loose streamers."

"What's jonquil then?" asked Kitty.

"It's a colour, a pretty yellow; a high-sounding name they've got for the daffy-down-dillies."

"Oh! them things," said Kitty, "they're too yellow for me."

"The jonquil ribbon is pale," said Miss Fitzsimmons, "almost straw colour, like a pale custard then," and she produced a roll of ribbon.

"It will cost too much"; and Kitty sighed.

"No use spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar," said Michael.

"It will take all my goose money," said Kitty.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"This silk, ma'am, will last a lifetime," remarked Miss Fitzsimmons.

"Indeed then, it will have to. It's seven children I've got, and six of them girls, Miss Fitzsimmons."

"And when you've done with it, see the elegant gowns it will make for the girls, and their hats trimmed with the jonquil ribbon."

Kitty had an instant vision of Patience and Rosaleen going to Malew Church in amethyst silk gowns, with white hats trimmed with jonquil ribbons, and all the young men admiring them. It was a Patience and Rosaleen grown up, for the silk was to last her a long, long time. "I'll have the hat as well," she said aloud. "And how Betty will envy me," she said to herself.

CHAPTER VI

MANX STORIES

“ But isn’t it law for a witch to be rowlin’
Down a brew in a barrel and bumpin’ and bowlin’
Over the rocks, and nails that teases
And rags and cuts her all to pieces—
Pintin’ innards? Lek they done
At Slieauwhallen.”

T. E. Brown.

“ The myth is a sustained, still-remaining fragment from the soul-life of the people.”—K. Abraham, “ *Dreams and Myths*.”

§ i

PATIENCE QUILLIAM went home along the sea-shore with a sad heart, clasping her bundle of cottons. Susan took the basket of trout, and Patience sought comfort in the back kitchen. It was bedtime ; but Pyee was still at Derbyhaven and Patience knew she would be telling stories. Pyee sat on a stool in the chimney corner smoking her pipe. On their knees in front of the fire were Rosaleen, Matthew, and Bride, watching a string with three apples roasting before the fire.

“ There’s an apple for you,” Rosaleen told her. “ Dorcas has got it.”

Dorcas was in the back parlour with Phrancie Parr ; she was threading beads to make a necklace, and Phrancie was singing softly to baby Faith and making indigo woollen frocks for the little girls. Dorcas gave Patience her apple, and she placed it on the string to roast. She sat down to hear the stories.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"About the witches," said Rosaleen.

"No, about fairies," pleaded Bride.

"Witches on Slieauwhallen," commanded Matthew.

"Witches," agreed Patience.

"I'll be tellin' about fairies when the witches is done, *chree*," said Pyee to little Bride, and she began: "A cruel mountain is Slieauwhallen, an' steep it is, like the side of a house, an' ter'ble cruel was the people in them days. Slieauwhallen is Greebah way, there beyond," and Pyee pointed in the direction vaguely waving her pipe. "At the fut of Greebah is the Curragh-glass (gray bog); a ter'ble bog it is, with the mud an' peat an' wather, that a body can't walk ther at all; but jus' sinks in, an' smothered they are, with the mud an' wather, aw! the lots of witches there were yandher in the olden times; hapes of them; an' castin' evil eyes they was on a body's house, an' childer', an' cattle an' all. 'Twas ter'ble the throuble the witches caused in them days. An' when the thunders roared on them mountain tops, an' the wind blowin', an' the lightnin' just rivin' the skies open, then the witches was enj'ying themselves. Ridin' on broomsticks they was, up in the air, houlin' revels an' the lek; an' nobody could ever catch them. They'd nip back home thro' the hole in the thatch to let the smook out, an' sit there in the corner as nice as you plaze, in caps an' clane aprons an' all. There were laws agen witches in them days; but no person could tell which was witches, and which was not. So they was all took to the fut of Greebah an' made to walk the Curragh-glass. If they sunk down an' was smothered, then they was not witches at all, an' was buried proper in the churchyard by the passon; but if they got across the bog, then it proved they was witches, and they had the chice of bein' burnt at the stake, or bein' put into

MANX STORIES

barrels with big spikes inside, an' rolled down from the top of the ter'ble steep mountain Slieauwhallen."

Pyee ceased, and the children sighed with deep satisfaction, except Bride, who was crying with her fingers stuffed in her ears.

"What's burnt at the stake?" asked Patience.

"It's tying the poor souls to a post, an' hapin' bundles of dried gorse an' ling about them, an' settin' fire to it; an' pilin' sticks on to make a big blaze until the poor cratures was burnt to cinders, so they was."

"I'd have got over the bog, and run away," declared Patience.

"You'd have been caught quick enough, chile."

"A real witch could change into a cat or a mouse an' run away," persisted Patience.

"Were the witches always dead when the barrels got to the bottom?" Matthew wanted to know.

"Deed so, dead as herrin's."

"Are herrin's deader than cod an' conger?"

"They are so, the deadeſt fish that are."

"Now tell us about fairies," begged Bride.

"Have you ever seen a fairy, Pyee?" asked Rosaleen.

"Not seen one with mee own eyes, chile, but mee sister that's dead, Kirrie she was, seen fairies, she did."

"What are they like, Pyee?"

"Little, little things, then, no bigger than mee middle finger, in brown an' green coats, an' gold braid, an' little, little boots, you'd wonder, the little they are; an' lady fairies too, in big hooped perricuts made of blue silk an' silver, an' they dance wonderful nice."

"Where did she see them, Pyee?"

"In the Maſther's ſtable. In ſervice ſhe was, at a big

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

farm over Foxdale way, Ballavondee it was ; an' the bull was in the corn ; an' she went in quick to tell the man, an' she seen a light, a little light shinin' soft like, jist by the manger, an' there sure enuff on the flure, was a lot of the ' little people,' sittin' talkin', as grave as a passon in church, they was."

"What were they sitting on, Pyee ?"

"On annythin' ; one lil' fella was on a bit of an oul' cork ; he was king like ; an' the others was standin' roun' talkin' ; but two was sittin' by the king on flitter-shells (limpet shells) an' fine seats they made. So freckened was Kirrie when she seen them that she called out loud 'O! murdher !' an' crossed her fingers quick, an' the light went out, an' they was all gone."

"And where did she see them the next time ?"

"It was comin' from Ballasalla to Castletown she was, at night ; an' a moon shinin' in the sky lovely, an' all the hedges an' fields lookin' like silver an' frost, so beautiful it was. She was goin' home. Married she was then, to Ambrose Callow, an' livin' in Mill Street. The road bends, like a big elbow, an' there's a lot of weeds an' rushes, growin' thick there by the hedge ; Kirrie was fancyin' she heard sweet music soundin' a long way off ; an' then she seen a little light, an' on the groun' among the rushes an' weeds was lots of little fairies, dancin' like butterflies, as pretty as pretty, an' with the moon shinin', an' the smell of the honeysuckle in the hedge, an' the lovely tinkle, tinkle of the fairy music, Kirrie said it was the beautifulest sight she'd ever seen. She wasn't freckened at all. She jist stood still thinkin' the lovely it was ; an' then she sneezed an' she remembered that the fairies would nip her away if nobody said ' God bless you ' to her, an' nobody was there,

MANX STORIES

so Kirrie shouted out loud, 'God bless mee' three times, an' began to say 'Our Father,' then she looked, an' nothin' was there, they had all gone."

"I want to go an' see them," said Bride.

"Me too," said Patience.

"Not yet awhile," coaxed Pyee; "when little childer see fairies, the little people catch them as quick as quick, an' send changelin's in their place."

"I'll see them when I'm as old as Rosaleen," Bride declared.

"Now tell us about the fairy cup at Malew Church," Rosaleen demanded.

"Once," began Pyee, "in th' ould days a farmer from Malew parish livin' Ballasalla way, got lost comin' from Peel across the Mountains. He walked, an' he walked, an' couldn't find the path at all. Then he heard the softest an' nicest music, tinklin', jus' like little church bells, an' he followed the music, an' followed it, till he found himself in a gran' place, as big as a big barn; an' gran' it was you'd wonder. Gran' chairs covered with silk; an' a flure all gould. There was a big table, an' a supper on it. Aw! an' wonderful nice things to eat there was for sure. Turkeys, roast on a spit, grapes, an' fine white bread you could blow it away with a breath, the light it was. People was sittin' there enj'yin' themselves, an' the farmer was fancyin' he'd seen them before. Then the little people offered him a drink out of a roun' silver cup, with no handles at it. He tuk the cup, an' the people he was fancyin' he'd seen before, pulled the tails of his coat. 'Don't drink at all,' they said, 'or you'll never see your home again.' So the farmer threw the drink on the flure. Then the fine place, an' music, an' supper was all gone like the smoke; an'

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

there he was on the mountain, with the cup in his hand. Next day he tuk the cup to Kirk Malew an' showed it to the passon; an' the passon said he'd better give it to the church, an' he did, an' that very cup is there now, an' on the Communion table folks say."

"Can I go and see it?" asked Bride.

"When you grows up, *chree*, an' has Communion, then you'll drink the wine out of it."

"Who were the people who told him not to drink?" asked Bride.

"Manx folk, who'd been nipped away by the little people; an' mind you, childer, if a fairy speaks to you, be as perlite as you please, but never eat a bite nor drink a sup they're offerin' ye."

A satisfied sigh went round the circle.

"Now Pyee, tell us Illiam Dhone," said Rosaleen.

"Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe," sang Matthew, sticking a darning needle into his apple to see if it was done. It was bursting and sizzling, and Matthew held a plate underneath to catch the droppings. "Mine's done," he declared, detaching it from the string. "Give me lots of sugar to eat with it, Pyee."

Pyee attended to his needs.

"Now Illiam Dhone," he commanded.

"I don't rightly know it, childer, but it was the murther of a good man, shot on Hango Hill so he was, but I'm forgettin'."

"Then tell us about the giants," demanded Matthew.

"Ay! the giants, big monsters they was too, tearin' up the biggest trees as aisy as aisy, an' hurlin' rocks about astonishin'. The fairies was freckened of them so they were, an' hid in the tramman (elder) trees. Wonderful

MANX STORIES

things is the tramman trees for keepin' away witches an' the lek. 'Twas out of the mountains the giants come, an' the harm they done to the islan' was shockin'. Then Mannanan come an' druv' them all away. He cast spells on the giants, an' the crathurs grew drowsy like an' then they fell fast asleep—the souls—an' they are asleep now down under Castle Rushen, an' under Ronaldsway, an' under our very feet maybe. In ter'ble nice big rooms they are; with their heads lying on a book, an' a sword at them, an' hapes of jewels scattered about. An' they will sleep an' sleep to the end of the world, so they will."

"Can I go an' see them?" asked Matthew.

"Deed no then, for no person ever comes back that tries to see them. It's guarded they are by dreadful spirits an' the lek."

"Run, children," called out Susan, "here's wheels comin'."

"My apple," wailed Patience.

"I bring it to thee upstairs by and bye," soothed Susan.

"With lots of sugar?" asked Patience.

"Lots, child, lots," said good Susan.

§ ii

Mollie Christane with her soft blue eyes, gracious mildness, and sweet voice was perhaps the most beautiful girl in the Isle of Man, and she was good as well as beautiful, with a serious gravity and religious faith which often aroused Betty's scorn. Many wooers came to Ballasalla

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

hoping for Mollie's smiles ; but she took little heed of them, and kept all her smiles for Stephen Fannin of Ballakilleen by the sea beyond Scarlet. There was a shyness and reticence about the big Stephen which appealed to Mollie and aroused her maternal tenderness, as well as her girlish love. To be with Stephen, to help and talk to him, was her deepest happiness. Stephen had a taste for books. He read the poetry of Sir Walter Scott ; and learned by heart great passages from Shakespeare, in the winter evenings ; and he recited them to himself as he ploughed his fields by the seashore, followed by hundreds of screaming gulls picking up worms from the newly-turned furrow. He was a friend of Mr. Thaddy Teare, the Schoolmaster of Ballasalla ; and under him he worked at Latin and mathematics in the summer evenings ; vaguely hoping that some day he, too, might become a schoolmaster. Then he met Mollie, in her young gracious womanhood, and became her slave. Mollie also loved books, not that she knew much about them, for according to the traditions of her environment, books were fit only for idle folk who had leisure to indulge in them, and money to spend on them. But Mollie, too, found a secret solace in learning, and she kept her treasures in her bottom bureau drawer, and burnt many tallow candles in the dead hours of the night, poring over books, unsuspected even by the prying Betty ; for Mollie had one unspeakable blessing in her life, a little room of her own. Mollie's most persistent wooer was Jude Kameen, a widower, a lawyer, and very much favoured by Mollie's relations ; and with the tactlessness of near relations they were ever urging his desirability upon her. Much candid criticism was showered upon Mollie, after she plighted her troth to Stephen one evening at dusk in the

MANX STORIES

Claddagh by the river, with a pale young moon shining upon them.

"You will always be true to me, Mollie," urged Stephen hoarse with emotion.

"Until death, Stephen," said Mollie gravely.

A storm of reproaches fell upon Mollie at home.

"Thou'rt not wise, girl," said her mother, "and Jude Kameen ready to put the ring on thee finger any day."

"Jude Kameen has a mean face, like a fox," said Mollie.

"The face is nothing, when there's money at him," scoffed Betty, "and a fine home he's got; an' horses, an' maybe a carriage if his wife took a notion for one. It's a lady you'd be, Mollie, an' a second wife too. A man's always softer with his second."

And Betty sighed with envy and self-pity; for a cast in her eye and an unfortunate twist at the end of her nose, debarred her from the excitements which were Mollie's portion.

"He's a lawyer, girl," went on her mother, "a nice, gentleman-like thing to be. As good as a passon, an' more money at him. It's grasping the lawyers are, not but what passons grasp too; look at the Bishop with his tithe on turnips."

"What's against Jude Kameen then?" queried Betty, noting Mollie's disgust at the discussion.

"He's not my choice, Betty."

"I wish I'd your chance, Mollie, an' the dash I'd cut would astonish some folk; but there, I'm the unlucky one," said regretful Betty.

"To be choosin' Stephen Fannin," went on her mother. "What's come over thee, Mollie? He'll never be the

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

farmer his father was, and Ballakilleen not his own at all. It's his mother's, with Isabella and Ann to have shares ; and a share of a farm is a poor thing."

"Love an' courtin' is well enough, before thou'rt wed, Mollie," warned Betty, "but the years go by, and there's no comfort in life like a bit of money for all."

Mollie only smiled. "I have Stephen," she said, "and I ask no more from life."

She blossomed into a beautiful young woman in those happy days of her early courtship, and the light of love shone in her sweet eyes. "It's amazin', so it is," reflected Betty, "that being in love makes folks so good lookin'"; and she examined her own somewhat lop-sided countenance in the little mirror, and wondered if love could ever make it comely.

§ iii

It was close on midnight, and Mollie sat in her dim little room, bending over a French exercise by the light of a tallow dip in an old flat-bottomed candlestick of pewter. Suddenly she was conscious of the hoof of a horse outside and a low voice calling, "Mollie!"

She went to the window and gazed out. The slip of a new moon hid behind a cloud like a shy girl ; the distant waves boomed on the beach ; but darkness hid the sea and land. "Is it Stephen?" she whispered.

"Yes, Mollie. Come down, girl."

"Is aught wrong with thee, Stephen?" she whispered tenderly.

"Nothing, Mollie, but I've bad news, dear one."

"I'm coming, Stephen."

MANX STORIES

She hastily blew out the light, crept downstairs, unbolted the door, and stepped outside. There stood Stephen, tying his horse to a hook in the wall. The moon suddenly sailed from behind the cloud, and she saw his face was strained and anxious. Her heart for a moment seemed to cease beating, and a sense of calamity overwhelmed her.

"What is it, Stephen?"

"It's mother, she took a cold and died sudden, away there, with Isabella, and I'm going to England now, girl."

"Your poor mother. Oh! Stephen," and Mollie wept softly in his arms. "Is it from Derbyhaven you're going, Stephen?"

"I'll get the mail packet from Scotland calling at Douglas, Mollie."

"To die away from home among strangers," wept Mollie. "Can she rest in Malew Churchyard—can you bring her?"

"I'm afraid not, Mollie. That troubles Ann. She's crying dreadfully at home."

"I'll go and see her, Stephen. Oh! Stephen, you will come back soon, won't you?"

"I will, sweetheart," he promised. But Mollie was filled with dread.

"Nothing can happen to you, Stephen?"

"Nothing," he soothed. "After mother is buried, I'll come right home."

"There's no sea where Isabella lives, is there?"

"None, my dear."

"To be buried among strangers, without the sound of the sea," moaned Mollie. "Your poor mother!"

"Isabella was with her," comforted Stephen, "and she saw Isabella's boy, her first grandchild."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Give my dear love to Isabella, Stephen, and oh, do take care of yourself!"

Stephen smiled tenderly. "Nothing can happen to me, dear; I'm big and strong enough."

"Stephen, I don't want you to go. I feel that we are parting for a long, long time. Hark! there's Betty."

Betty peered out from the window above. "What is it, Mollie?" she asked.

"It's Stephen," Mollie whispered. "Come softly. Stephen is going away."

Betty joined them in the moonlight and listened to the tragic tale. "Well, if ever, Mrs. Duff!" she said; "and that's what comes of going to England. Folks is safer in the Isle of Man."

"I must be going, girl," said Stephen softly. "I'll just have time to get the mail packet from Scotland."

"Take care of yourself, Stephen. Oh! take care," warned Mollie.

Stephen tore himself away and rode off, and Mollie stood still watching him, until he was out of sight.

"It's a foolish woman Mrs. Fannin was, to go trapesing to England," she heard Betty say, as she strained to hear the last faint footfalls of Stephen's horse. But Mollie said nothing, and stood still as a statue in the pale moonlight.

"Don't you hear me, Mollie, what are you staring at?"

"The moonlight lies like silver on the fields and hedges," said Mollie in a strained voice, "and smell the honeysuckle, Betty."

"Nice!" and Betty sniffed the night air. "Come in, Mollie. You look like Lot's wife standing there, just like a pillar of salt"; and Betty laughed.

MANX STORIES

Mollie stole to her room to mourn over Stephen's calamity; and Betty went to waken her mother and tell her the news.

"Ay!" said her mother dourly. "I knew there was trouble in store when the woman went to England like that."

CHAPTER VII

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

“The Tarot of the Bohemians has been transmitted by Gypsies from generation to generation.”—*Dr. Papus*.

“In their ignorance of causes, mankind has always been prone to believe some special presence of God or a supernatural power to be in any unusual event.”—*A Discourse on Witchcraft* (1736).

§ i

“THEE’LL be wantin’ to put a sight on Ann Fannin,” said Mrs. Christane; “hasten with the churnin’, an’ get to Castletown early. Thee can see Tom Shimmin about the cardin’ of the wool. On thy way to Scarlet look into ould Phœbe Fells’ for the green ointment. It draws the pain out of me joints wonderful.”

“Yes, mother,” said Mollie.

“Don’t be hinderin’ at all, an’ don’t be mindin’ dinner. Thou canst take a cup of milk, an’ barley bread an’ cheese.”

“Yes, mother,” said Mollie.

Mrs. Christane followed Mollie into the dairy talking. “’Tis a foolish woman Mrs. Fannin was to go trapesing off to England, where there’s no right food at all. Folks will eat bacon there I’m tould, an’ never know the pig it comes from; and geese cooped up in dirty backyards that never saw the seashore, nor a cut barley field. No wonder the English get sick, an’ come to the Isle of Man to get well.” Mollie went on churning. “Go thou into Ben Kinraide’s, and buy one of them Dutch ovens he’s got; wonderful handy things they are, not burnin’ the food at

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

all. Didst thou hear that Jude Kameen is across the water ? ”

“ Betty said so,” replied Mollie.

“ Ay ! there’s ould Nat Quine dead, too ; a rich man he was. Uncle he would be to Jude Kameen. I mind him well when he was a boy ; an’ his sister, Bessie Quine, she was Jude Kameen’s mother. A girl with a cast in her eye, she was, an’ a wart on her chin. Bessie an’ me went to school to Miss Christian in Malew Street, to learn fine stitching ; a genteel body was Miss Christian with a cork leg.”

But Mollie was not heeding. She went on churning deftly and mechanically with her eyes and her thoughts full of Stephen.

“ The Quines was all rich,” went on the old woman. “ Bessie an’ Nat Quine’s father made a fine lot in the smugglin’ days. Columbus Quine, he was ; an’ many’s the keg of brandy he kept hid about Santon an’ Langness. ‘ Skim milk ’ they was callin’ brandy in them days, an’ ’tis shockin’ how the men did drink to be sure, but the money they made, for all. Old Columbus Quine had a big sea-chest hid away in a cellar in his garden, folks said, an’ full it was of golden guineas ; thousan’s of them ; an’ when he wanted money he just tuk a handful. Bessie always was a *skeet* of a thing, but she got a husband for all, not by the beauty of her, but by her father’s guineas. An’ a decent man, too, was Kameen ; a good church-goin’ man, an’ he made money, so he did, in the red herrin’ trade, employin’ women, he was, an’ smokin’ the herrin’s at Derbyhaven, on the way to the Fort Island, an’ goin’ sendin’ the barrels of herrin’s to England. Jude Kameen was their only child. He got learnin’, and they made him an advocate in Douglas,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

as fine as you please ; an' now he's gettin' all ould Nat Quine's money. A clever man was Nat. He took his father's golden guineas to Liverpool, an' traded with them, makin' more, like the man with ten talents in the Bible. Aw ! the luck of some people. An' you, Mollie, could have all the riches of the Quine family, an' Mr. Jude Kameen, too, if you only looked at things right."

"I don't want his money, nor Mr. Jude Kameen either, mother."

"Thou'lt make a *bogh* (poor thing) of thyself yet, Mollie," said her mother peevishly.

"I shall be Stephen Fannin's wife, mother, and no *bogh* at all," said Mollie calmly.

"*Boghnid*, child, *boghnid* (foolish talk), thou'lt find thy mistake one day. Mark my words."

§ ii

A pleasant walk had Mollie in the sunshine along the Claddagh by the Silverburn river. She plucked a stick of wild rhubarb to shield her from the sun and so she made her way to Castletown. A simple, grey little town, the ancient home of the Kings of Man, standing soberly in the sunshine, and breathing of past ages.

She passed the old quay, the chapel built by good Bishop Wilson, and the five-sailed windmill. There were stately houses around the market-place, and little white cottages huddled about the walls of the castle, sheltering at its base. The fine towers and battlements soared aloft against the blue sky, testifying to the skill of the builders. The clock in the tower—a gift of Queen Elizabeth—was striking

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

twelve as Mollie entered the market-place, and she turned into Queen Street with its untidy roadside cottages set down irregularly facing the sea. The cottage roofs were thatched with straw, and straw ropes fastened to large stones dangled at the sides to keep the thatch down. Against the whitewashed walls fish was drying in the sun; and pigs, geese and fowls ran in the road, scrambling for scraps flung from the cottages, the entrails of fish, the remains of crabs and lobsters, the peelings of potatoes, and flitter (limpet) and mussel shells. Many of the hovels had little gardens enclosed with fuchsia hedges hanging with red drops; while purple veronica straggled down to the shore, growing out of refuse heaps. Women in red petticoats and linen bedgowns chatted in the doorways, or spread their clothes to dry on the stones of the beach, and ragged, barefooted children played in the roadway.

Mollie found Phœbe Fell gathering nettles and the rusty flowers of the dock in the waste spaces on the shore. An aged woman was Phœbe, with bent brows, bushy white eyebrows and shrewd black eyes.

"You are busy, Phœbe," greeted Mollie.

"Well to be sure, 'tis Miss Mollie Christane, as pretty as the ling in bloom. Come in now, an' have a lil' drop of tay; the pot is on the hob, so it is."

"Thank you," said Mollie, following the old woman into the kitchen, with its clean sanded floor and gay crocks on the dresser.

"Is it nettle tea you'll be making with the nettles?" asked Mollie.

"Deed no, the nettles is too old. 'Tis the seeds I'm wanting now to crush in me mother's ould brass mortar for powther in the ointments."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"And the red docks, what are they for?"

"For blood, good red blood, aw! the wonderful they are for the blood, an' heart, fine, fine."

"I've come for the green ointment, Phœbe."

"Amazin' powerful it is; Mrs. Shimmin of the Carding Mill was sending some to the Clerk of the Rolls, an' it tuk the pains out of his legs wonderful."

"That's what mother says."

"For rheumatics, boils, running sores and plague, there's nothin' like the green ointment; but sit down, Miss Mollie, an' drink a cup of tay. From China it came. Tim Kelly brought it for me himself, so he did."

Mollie sat under the bundles of herbs hanging from the ceiling. Phœbe looked at her sharply. "Things is goin' to happen to ye, Miss Mollie, 'tis writ on your face like. I'll lay out the cards for ye, for the divination is upon me, an' it's only at times it comes." The old woman produced a pack of Tarot cards, worn and much thumb-marked. Mollie examined them curiously.

"What funny cards, Phœbe; they are not playing cards at all, like those I've seen at old Mrs. Quilliams'. She plays a game she calls cribbage with them; but mother says all playing cards are Devil's books!"

"There's not another pack like these in the Islan'," said Phœbe proudly. "They was me grandmother's; a gypsy they said she was, coming from the Egyptians, the same as you read of in the Bible. A knowin' woman she was, an' wise in the magic of the ancient kings, Pharaohs they was called."

Mollie looked at the signs on the cards with interest.

"Shuffle them well, child," said Phœbe, "then shuffle them again; this way," and the old woman showed Mollie

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

the meaning of 'shuffle,' for Mollie had never handled a pack of cards before.

"Aren't cards against the Bible?" asked Mollie seriously.

"Deed they are not then," affirmed Phœbe. "Don't we be readin' of Moses and Aaron an' them prophets an' priests an' kings makin' serpents, an' tellin' the manin' of drames an' the like, an' makin' plagues, too, to let God's people go through the Red Sea? Cards come from Egyptians of Bible times."

So Mollie was persuaded to shuffle the cards as directed.

"Think all the time of yourself, an' of those near to you. Never speak one word, but think hard an' let yourself flow into them cards," counselled Phœbe.

Mollie went on shuffling, and thinking of Stephen. Then Phœbe laid out the cards with much ceremony into a great star on the table. And this she studied carefully.

"There's trouble comin' to you," she said at last, "an' trouble to them near you. A cunnin' man is schamin' and plottin', a man between colours he is, neither dark nor fair, an' not hair enough to cover his head. He gets his will, too, an' ter'ble is the sorrow he causes. But there's joy far off, too. See them cup-cards crowdin' about you: they mean that there's a faithful lover, he's a man middlin' dark, an' true to you he'll be. Ay! an' you'll be true to him too. A long journey he'll go with a sore heart an' a blight on him. An' you'll go through the vale of tears. It's full of courage you'll be; and a long, long journey you'll go into a strange land. There's a ring there, an' work, agriculture, creation, an' money, hapes of money. I see you ridin' in a carriage."

Phœbe ceased, and Mollie paled. "Is there any more?" she asked.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Nothin'," said Phœbe, "but bitter, black sorrow around you now. See them cruel sword cards; but a long way off there's light, joy and everything happy about you. The cup cards is the lucky cards."

Mollie's heart contracted, and she saw Stephen in trouble, Stephen parted from her.

"Tell me more, Phœbe," she pleaded.

"There is no more, but just this. You can come to me in thrice seven days an' ask one question."

With that Mollie had to be content.

§ iii

Mollie was very thoughtful as she walked along the shore to Scarlet, on her way to Ballakilleen. The tide was out, and she heard the far crying of seagulls, the distant lapping of water, and out on the horizon the sea lost itself in a cloudy purplish haze. The dusty roadside was made gorgeous by masses of yellow cushag (ragwort), and the wild mallow with its great, purple, cup-like flowers. Her thoughts were all on Stephen. What harm could come to him? Would he meet Mr. Jude Kameen? "A man between colours," Phœbe said, "and not hair enough to cover his head." Jude Kameen had brownish hair, lifeless brown with no spring or vitality, and it was tinged with grey on the temples. Then his hair receded a long way back from his forehead. He had a narrow, foxy face, and greenish, slaty eyes which Mollie had never learned to trust. He was Stephen's enemy, Mollie was sure; but what harm could he do Stephen? So far as she knew the two were friendly enough, and Jude Kameen had been Stephen's lawyer, when

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

the latter's father had died. She passed the flat rocks at Scarlet, and the Stack, a contorted mass of rock with the sea swirling languidly around it; then she turned inland to Ballakilleen. The farm hid itself behind a little group of trees. It was a low, white building, with green shutters, and little windows facing the sea. Mollie walked across the two intervening fields to the farm. Ann came to meet her.

"Poor mother," wept Ann, clutching Mollie's hand. "It is hard to die in a strange land like that."

"She had Isabella with her," comforted Mollie, "and it was a joy to her to see Isabella's child."

"An' Stephen says he can't bring her home to Malew," said Ann; "she would like to be buried there within the sound of the sea."

"She would," agreed Mollie.

"We had warnings enough not to let mother go," went on Ann. "First she cut her hand on a nail in the wall when she was fetching the old trunk out of the top barn, and it bled so long that I had to do all the packing, an' her best bonnet fell off her head into a pan of milk in the dairy, an' it had to be taken to pieces an' washed in lu' warm water an' ironed out. Judy Quale had to come from Castletown to put it together again. Then she lost her green silk purse with all her money in it for two days, an' she found it at last under the ould pig trough, where she had put it herself while she went to feed the geese, and forgot all about it. Then her foot slipped on a potato, an' she fell into the mill pond. She was wet to the skin, an' even her stays had to have the whalebones out an' to be dried an' ironed. 'I've a mind not to go, Ann, girl!' she said to me; 'there's been lets an' hindrances enough sent

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

as warnings'; an' I said, 'It's a pity, mother, with the new bonnet an' gown, not to get a sight of Isabella's home.' 'So it is,' said mother, an' she got ready. Then when Stephen was drivin' her to Douglas, the horse cast a shoe. 'I'll not go, Stephen,' she said; but Stephen laughed at her, and she went on to her death, poor soul!" and Ann wept afresh.

Mollie comforted Ann in her soft, crooning voice. "Her troubles are over, and she has entered into the Kingdom of God," she said with beautiful seriousness.

"The night mother died," went on Ann, drying her tears, "I had the warnings, too; I saw two magpies in the croft, an' 'tis a sign of death; ould Katty Coole was staying in the house to help me, when mother was away, an' she'd gone down to the shore to pick driftwood an' gorse for lightin' fires. Coming back in the dusk she met a funeral, all real like with black horses an' a lot of mourners. It was still as death, an' the horses' feet made no sound. 'It's ter'ble queer,' thinks Katty, 'to be having funerals in this place at this time of night,' and then she knew it was no funeral at all, but just a warning, an' it passed her with never a sound, an' it was pale with fright she was when she got in."

"It was perhaps the shadows cast by the trees along the croft wall," suggested Mollie.

"Indeed no," affirmed Ann, "for the sun had gone, an' there was no moon at all. I gave Katty a cup of tea, an' a sup of rum in it, an' we made a fine big fire to heat the irons for the linen sheets; 'tis coarse linen they are, Mollie, spun by Granny, an' middlin' big; 'tis a ter'ble lot of ironin' they want. An' I went to the door an' looked out, for I was feelin' sad an' frightened like, an' I saw a corpse

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

candle flitting along on the sea, to the church at Castletown it was goin' sure enough. I bolted the door and come in wishin' Stephen was at home, an' Katty said, 'Funerals is signs of death in the family.' 'Don't be talkin' such nonsense, Katty,' I said; an' at that moment a coal burst with a loud crack, an' out came a bit of stone like, an' fell on mother's chair. I shook it off, an' when it was cold I took it up; just a bit of cinder it was, an' without thinkin', I popped it into the china box on the chimney piece, and Mollie! the china box was the very one mother had brought me from St. John's on Tynwald Day"; and Ann produced the bit of cinder and sobbed again.

Mollie examined it. "It is queer enough, Ann," she said, "and there be lots of queer things happening at times like these."

"Katty, the soul! never did a stroke of ironing that night," went on Ann. "'Tis the misthress," she said, for sure, "'tis the misthress," and she screeched like folks at a wake. Then Stephen came in, and I was so frightened that I got Katty to sleep in the same room with me. And Mollie! all night we heard the *monney vaaish* (death watch) tickin' an' tickin' like an ould watch."

"Don't think of these things, Ann," soothed Mollie, "and do not let them frighten you. Be comforted in thinking that your mother died peacefully in Isabella's house, and not among strangers."

"She died quiet," said Ann, "she just gave a sigh and was gone, Isabella said in her letter. Poor mother! we shall hear all about it when Stephen comes home."

"When will Stephen be at home?"

"As soon as he can arrange the funeral. Poor mother! to be buried among strangers. Mollie, at the Judgment

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Day, how will mother get across the sea to join us all in Malew Churchyard?"

"God will arrange it all," said Mollie simply, with the faith of a child.

That night, at supper, Mollie was questioned by Betty and her mother on the news of the day, and the knowledge that Phœbe Fell had laid out the cards for Mollie excited Betty's envy.

"How I'd like her to lay out the cards for me," she said; "and what did she tell thee then?"

"That trouble was coming."

"Trouble enough," grumbled her mother, "with these wicked tithes the Bishop is wantin'. 'Tis shameful, so it is. The man will be wantin' next to put tithes on the very nettles in the stackyard."

"Was there nothin' but trouble in thy fortune?" Betty asked.

"A journey, a marriage ring, and a lot of money."

"That's pointing to Mr. Jude Kameen, an' all the new riches he'll be getting from his uncle in England," said the far-seeing Betty. "You'd likely be livin' in England, Mollie, if you'd marry the man and live in his grand house across."

"You forget, Betty, that I am to marry Stephen Fannin."

"There's no money in farmin' at all," said her mother gloomily, "and Stephen will make a poor hand at it, now that his mother is gone. He's too much for book-learnin', like thee, Mollie."

Mollie adroitly changed the subject and went on to tell of Ann and the death warnings.

"Ay! warnings come to the nearest of kin. I mind well the warnings I had when thy father died. A great white

SWORD AND CUP CARDS

owl it was, flapping its wings in me face, an' thy father was hearing a little bell tinkling. It was calling him away."

After supper Betty whispered, "Come, Mollie, to the Brideson's. Fanny, Maria, and me are making a dumb cake, to see the man we shall marry."

"I know the man I'm to marry, Betty, and I'm tired and sad."

"No need to mourn thy mother-in-law, when she isn't thy mother-in-law at all. Why can't you be *jonnack*, Mollie, for once?"

CHAPTER VIII

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

"The goblets all are broken,
The pleasant wine is spilt,
The songs cease."

Christina Rossetti.

"I love one, and he loveth me;
And is this thought a cause of bliss
Or source of misery?"

Christina Rossetti.

§ i

STEPHEN FANNIN had a bad passage to Liverpool. Fog caused the ship to be delayed for hours in the river, and the angry and chilled passengers were full of complaints. Jude Kameen was crossing in the same boat, and the two fell into conversation. The lawyer was sympathetic when he heard of Stephen's sad mission. The hours dragged on, and the ship still tarried in the dirty fog. Stephen was wild with impatience. "I'll not get to Stone this night," he lamented.

"You will not," opined Mr. Kameen. "How are you going there?"

"There's coaches running, I'm told."

"Yes, the 'New Champion' passes through Stone on the way to London, but you'll get no seat in that. There's other coaches, to be sure, but waiting for coaches is a dreary business."

Stephen agreed. "I expect I must be hirin' a horse."

"But you'll not be tryin' to get on to-night in the fog."

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

"The matter is urgent. I ought to get on," sighed Stephen.

"You'll lose your way in the fog and dark."

"I daresay; I wish I knew the road."

"Wait till morning, man, get a good sleep to-night, and start early in the morning. You'll get to Stone quicker if you are fresh and rested."

"I expect so," said Stephen, "but there's a horse to be hired."

"As for that, I can lend you a capital little chestnut mare."

Stephen brightened. "It's very good of you, Mr. Kameen," he said.

"Not at all, not at all, in a time like this," mumbled Jude.

"And where will I get the mare?"

"It's at Mallowfield Lodge, the estate of my late uncle, Mr. Nathaniel Quine, and bequeathed to me. You'd better put up at the Lion Hotel; the place is not a mile from there. How early will you want to start?"

"Six o'clock," said Stephen promptly.

"Good; well, you can fetch the mare yourself. My man won't be there till eight, and there's nobody else in the house but a deaf old housekeeper. I'll be there, of course, but as I'm a heavy sleeper, I shall certainly not be awake."

"Don't trouble to get up for me. I'll give the horse a feed and saddle it right enough."

So it was agreed.

"I'll leave the key of the stable under the trough of the pump," went on Jude. "You can unlock the stable yourself."

"That will be all right," said Stephen. "You are very kind, Mr. Kameen; I'll be there sharp at six and get along in daylight."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

So matters were arranged. Very chill and miserable was Liverpool, wrapped in a dirty mist, and drizzling with rain. Stephen made his way to the Lion Hotel, ordered a meal and bed, wrote to Mollie, and requested to be called at five o'clock next morning.

Jude Kameen lingered at an unsightly inn in the neighbourhood of the docks, and found the man he sought, a certain Jerry Koteen, who made a dishonest living in divers shady ways. There was a consultation between the two over pots of rum, gold coins passed from Mr. Kameen to Mr. Koteen. "You won't bungle, Jerry."

"Trust me, guvenor," said Mr. Koteen, winking hideously.

"He leaves for Stone at six sharp."

"I'll meet him on the way, guvenor."

"Silent as the grave, Jerry."

"Ay, guvenor, and the horse to be mine, too?"

"Yes, if you make a neat job of it."

"Trust me, guvenor," and Mr. Koteen grinned.

Then Jude Kameen sought Mallowfield Lodge, the abode of his late uncle, and he smiled to himself as he indulged in rosy dreams of Mollie Christane. With Stephen out of the way Mollie would be his; and how easy it would be to get him transported or hanged. He sat pondering and drinking brandy and water until the deaf woman came to say that the house was locked up and she was going to bed. Jude intimated to her that he was not feeling well and might want a cup of tea in the early morning, but he bade her not to get up to make it unless he aroused her. She agreed. The signal was a piece of tape tied round her arm and passed under her door. In this way Mr. Nathaniel Quine had been wont to arouse her during his illness.

It was nearly midnight before Mr. Jude Kameen sought

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

his bed. His preparations were made carefully. Wrapping a woollen muffler round his arm, he went outside, and deliberately broke the kitchen window, reached in his arm and took the stable key from the nail beside the window, where it was always kept, and hid it under the trough of the pump. Then he carefully dropped a Manx halfpenny in the yard, and went to bed. His night was restless and uneasy, and long before it was light he had consulted his watch many times. At a quarter to six he saw Stephen enter the yard. Then he summoned his house-keeper, and asked her to get him a cup of hot tea. The old woman slipped on a petticoat and shawl. She went into the kitchen, stirred up the fire, threw wood on it, and took the kettle into the yard to fill at the pump. Seeing the stable door open, she looked in and was amazed at the sight of Stephen saddling the mare.

"Let th' beast be, thou wicked thief," she shouted.

Stephen smiled at her. "It is all right," he said. "Your master has lent her to me."

"Thief," she shouted again, "let th' beast abide."

"I can't argue with a deaf body," said Stephen, and he smiled again, tossed the old woman a shilling, mounted the mare, and rode off.

"Thief. Thief. Thief," shouted the woman, throwing the kettle after him, and running to the gate to throw stones at him.

This availed little, so she ran into the house to arouse her master. With difficulty Jude was made to understand the calamity which had befallen him. In the distance he saw Stephen riding away. "There he is, master, a tall rascal of a thief, throwing silver at me and stealing t' mare."

"Manx," said Jude aloud. "I'll warrant that beaver hat

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

was made in Ballasalla," but nobody heard him, and he wrote on the old woman's slate, "What like was the man?"

"A murderous-looking thief, master, in a cutaway coat, knee breeches dyed blue, and blue worsted stockings. A tall country hat and a wicked smile. See, master, here's a thing he's dropped," and she picked up the Manx halfpenny.

"A piece of evidence," said Jude, putting it into his pocket, "a thieving Manx rascal." He wrote on the old woman's tablet: "Run and call a constable."

"Housebreaking and horse-stealing," was the verdict pronounced by the functionary of the law. There was the broken window, the key in the stable door, the horse gone. The housekeeper's description was carefully taken—"a big man, with dark hair and wicked eyes, smiling as impudent as the devil." The Manx halfpenny was produced. "A Manxman," declared the constable, and when Jude Kameen added his testimony of the tall beaver hat made in Ballasalla the evidence was complete. Having a fairly accurate description of man and horse, and knowing the direction the thief had taken, there was little difficulty in tracking him along the Congleton Road.

§ ii

The ride in the early morning in a new country was delightful to Stephen. He scanned the fields, the trim hedges, the tidy farmhouses, with deep attention, and the toll gates pleased him. On the outskirts of Congleton, he halted, and inquired his way of a disreputable person sitting in a ditch. "Straight on, guvenor, to Congleton," said the man. "Where'll you be wanting to go in Congleton?"

"I'm wanting something to eat before I go further."

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

"There's 'The Waggoner and Horses,' with good ale and accommodation for the beast."

"Is it very far?" asked Stephen, who was, in truth, weary.

"Three miles by road, guvenor, but by yonder pony track you can do it one mile, and get in by the garden door."

Stephen thanked the man and took the short cut, through the fields; the man followed at a safe distance. The garden proved to be an old-fashioned tea-garden, with seats placed in the shade under the trees. London pride and Michaelmas daisies grew wildly in beds confined by straggled box edgings. On one side lay a circular group of arbours, and on the other was the stable yard. Stephen led his horse through to the yard. It was deserted save for a fox chained in a dog kennel which barked at him; and some hens scratching in the straw. He led his horse into an empty stable, gave it a drink of water, and entered the inn by the back door. The place was absolutely deserted. Kitchen, smoke-room, bar-parlour, and private parlour were alike destitute of human beings. Glancing through a window facing the highway, Stephen discovered the cause of this desertion. A circus travelling to Congleton was giving a gratuitous performance before the inn; and the road was thronged with spectators. Ostlers, bar-tender, maids, master, mistress and customers were alike enjoying the spectacle. There were gaily painted vans drawn by elephants with clowns for drivers. Two haughty camels regarded the audience sourly, with eyes of malice; and a beautiful lady in short skirts danced through a hoop on the top of the biggest caravan. Stephen, excited by these untoward sights, joined the spectators. Mr. Jerry Koteen slunk through the pleasure garden, entered the inn yard, led the horse from the stable, mounted it, and was far away in the deserted lane before the circus performance was over.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"It was as easy as easy as billy-ho," said Mr. Jerry Koteen to himself with a hoarse chuckle.

When the excitement was over, Stephen asked for cold meat and ale, and required the ostler to attend to his horse.

"What horse?" said the ostler.

"Little chestnut mare. I put it in the stable myself."

"Ain't nothink in t' stable."

The landlord was annoyed when Stephen suggested that his horse had been stolen.

"You say the horse was there," he said. "How did it get there? the road was full of t' circus."

"I came in through the tea garden."

"That ain't no way to come, no road for a horse that way," he declared roughly. Indeed, he clearly indicated that he considered Stephen an impostor, and threatened to give him in charge unless he cleared out. Stephen made his way to Congleton, gave information to the constable of the loss of his horse, and wrote a letter to Jude Kameen informing him of his loss. "If the little mare isn't found I'll pay for it," he concluded. Then he was fortunate enough to get a seat in a coach on to Stone.

Mr. Jude Kameen read Stephen's letter with satisfaction. He would have burned it, but there was no fire in the house, except in the kitchen, and here the deaf woman sat recounting to her sister, who lived in the lodge at the gate with her grandchild, her adventure with the thief, so Jude thrust it in his pocket. Later he walked down to the lodge to assure himself that the gate was shut, and stayed to speak to the grandchild of the lodgekeeper, a pretty little boy. "I've got a tut finger," boasted the child, pulling off the piece of rag which bound it. The cut started to bleed afresh. Jude pulled out his large silk handkerchief to staunch the blood,

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

and the letter from Stephen fell on the gravel path. The child's grandmother hastily placed the watering can over it, and when Jude had gone, she picked it up and hid it in her work-basket. She could not read, but she muttered to herself, "Who's knows the use it may be."

Stephen was met by a weeping Isabella, and a long account of the mother's death.

"The cold had gripped her, an' it turned to inflammation of the lungs. She died in a few hours. Poor mother," said Isabella.

"Poor mother, indeed," echoed Stephen as he gazed at her still features dignified by death.

Tom Tyson, Isabella's husband, a miller by trade, was helpful in suggesting the burial arrangements that seemed fitting, and Stephen was carrying them out, when suddenly he was arrested for stealing a horse from Liverpool, belonging to Mr. Jude Kameen.

Stephen asserted that the horse was lent to him.

"Where is it then?" he was asked.

"It was stolen from me at 'The Waggoner and Horses,'" affirmed Stephen.

The landlord and all his staff were confident that Stephen had no horse at all. "He just slunk in t' back way through t' gardens," affirmed the landlord, "and then started shouting for his horse."

The testimony of Mr. Kameen and the evidence of the deaf woman were equally damaging. Mr. Kameen denied lending the horse to Stephen, and denied receiving any letter from him offering to make good the loss. So Stephen was put into prison to await his trial at the Assizes. "I've got thee now, my lad," Mr. Kameen muttered to himself, "and pretty Mollie Christane at the same time." It is true he was

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

much troubled by the loss of a letter, and had the house and grounds carefully searched. But the gardener had been burning garden rubbish, and declared that "a power of old paper littering the place" had been destroyed. So Jude calmed his fears.

§ iii

Mollie had one letter from Stephen, written on his arrival in Liverpool. He told her about the journey, and of his meeting Jude Kameen on the boat. He said nothing about Jude Kameen's offer to lend him a horse, thinking it might annoy her. He said he hoped to get on to Stone next day. The letter cheered her unaccountable sadness, for her mind was heavy with a sense of calamity. She carried the letter inside her bodice and it lay warm against her heart.

Suddenly the blow fell upon her with cruel force, and a bitter blinding sorrow overshadowed her life for many a long day. She was working in the garden, when she heard herself called from the lane. She went to the fence and found Katty Coole from Ballakilleen sitting in the old gig. Her heart thumped within her. "What is it, Katty?" she asked.

"Miss Ann Fannin is wantin' ye. It's new trouble she's in, an' is crying like a chile so she is."

"What is wrong, Katty?" and Mollie's face was suddenly drained of its warm, red blood. "Like a stale cream cheese her cheeks is, the poor sowl," thought Katty to herself.

"Everythin' is wrong, I'm thinkin'. Mr. Tyson has come from Stone an' he does be saying that Mr. Fannin is in prison for stealin'."

Mollie controlled herself with a great effort. "Wait

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

one minute, Katty," and Mollie ran into the kitchen, snatched up her bonnet, and dropped her apron on the floor.

"Where art thee goin', Mollie, leavin' the weeding like that?"

"I'm goin' to Ann Fannin, mother."

"Always the Fannins," grumbled the old woman. "An' what's wrong with them now?"

But Mollie did not hear her; she was in the gig and driving along the Castletown road as fast as the horse could go. She found Ann weak with weeping, sitting alone by the kitchen table. Tom Tyson had gone to the Lawyer Gick to arrange about a mortgage on the farm. "Mollie," cried the distracted Ann, flinging herself upon her friend, "'tis Stephen; he's in prison for stealing a horse."

The room whirled round Mollie; she grasped the table to keep herself from fainting. "A horse!" she gasped, "whose horse? Stephen never stole a horse."

"'Tis Jude Kameen's horse; he says Stephen came to his house and took his horse."

"God forgive the lying villain. Stephen, Stephen," she moaned. "They won't hang him, Ann?"

"Tom Tyson says they're not hanging so much now."

"But they couldn't hang Stephen, he's mine, an' he never stole, never, never!" sobbed Mollie.

"I know, Mollie, I know," wept poor Ann. "Tom Tyson has done all he could; there's a good lawyer got for Stephen, an' it's mortgaging the farm we are to get money to pay."

"Lawyers," said Mollie scornfully, "the wicked they are. Jude Kameen is a lawyer. Judas should be his name by rights. Christ Himself was betrayed by a Judas, and our own Illiam Dhone was shot on Hango Hill for saving the

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Manx people. It is a wicked world. God help me," and Mollie, losing all control, wept wildly.

Ann was frightened. "Don't cry so, Mollie. Tom Tyson says the lawyers think he won't be hanged, but transported to Australia."

"Made a convict of, put in irons, lanketted* like sheep, and sent to work in gangs," moaned Mollie. "Dear God, don't let it be true."

It was unthinkable, impossible, intolerable, and the two young things could only cling hopelessly to each other and weep.

Katty Coole lingered miserably outside the door, and to do something to relieve the dreadful tension, she made tea, frizzled some salt fish, smothered it in butter and brought it in with soda bread. The tea steadied them somewhat.

"Ann," said Mollie solemnly, "you know Stephen is innocent."

"Yes. I know that."

"And that Jude Kameen is a wicked liar."

"He is that, Mollie."

"Then it will come right, it *will* come right, it must. You will be true to him, Ann?"

"I'll sell me last petticoat to help him, Mollie."

"And I'd go barefoot all me days to help him. You'll never desert him, Ann."

"Never," said Ann solemnly.

"We'll save him, you and me," said Mollie. "We'll go to England to help him, pray God to help him. Get money

* The hind leg tied to fore leg, to prevent cattle from climbing the earthen fences.

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

to help him, and if they make him a convict, we'll go to Australia to help him."

"We will," agreed Ann solemnly, "and you'll marry him, Mollie."

"I'll marry him in prison, if they'll let me."

"What will we do now, Mollie? we must do something."

"We'll pray for him," said Mollie eagerly. "Pray in some little holy place near the sea, where God is, and no other people there to distract Him. There's lots of holy places in the Isle of Man with old chapels."

"There's the Abbey, and the Friary, they have ruined chapels," began Ann.

"And the little chapel on the Fort Island; that's wild and lonely. I'll go there, and make God hear me."

"And I'll go to Hango Hill where they shot Illiam Dhoné; there was a chapel there once, and a burying place," Ann replied.

"We'll go now," said Mollie, pining for action; and together they walked to Castletown, crossed the wooden bridge and walked along the shore to Hango Hill, on which stood a crumbling ruin. Ann climbed up and hid herself inside the ruin, knelt, and looking seaward across Castletown Bay, prayed God to make people believe her brother's innocence. Mollie crossed the Race-Course and made her way to the little ruined chapel on the Fort Island. Here she knelt at the rude stone altar and poured out her heart to God. "Hear me, hear me. God, do hear me, and help Stephen," was her passionate cry. She heard the scream of the seagull, and the ceaseless lap of the waves; and through the narrow window she saw the jagged grey rocks, the red of the heather, the gold of the gorse, and the sea everywhere, a blue mass of light and glory. Mollie arose from her knees less frightened;

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the thick darkness that was settling on her soul seemed to lighten. "God has heard me," she said solemnly. "Yes, Stephen, He has heard."

Mollie's faith was the faith of a little child, though in our innermost selves we are all of us children, and remain so throughout our lives

§ iv

The story of Stephen Fannin was much enjoyed by the gossips, and in the Isle of Man gossip is rife. It was whispered at cottage doors, it was told over counters, in fishing boats, on the way to church, by the loungers on the bridge, in the cow byres and over tea tables. Mollie, paralysed with grief as she was, found the gossip hard to bear. There was an appealing sadness about her in these days. The healthy bloom forsook her cheek, and she grew pale as a white rose. The comments of her family irked her more than the gossip outside.

"A fine lover you've got," remarked Betty, "to be stealin' that way from Jude Kameen. It's hanged he'll be, folks is thinking."

"God may forgive you, Betty, for your unkind thoughts ; I find it hard," said Mollie, pale as a ghost.

"Ay !" said her mother, "it's well the poor mother was took, not knowin' the disgrace at all. The Fannins was always respectable, never mixin' with stealin', hangin' an' the like."

"Stephen never stole, mother."

"Who set thee up as a judge then ? Disgracin' yourself you are, Mollie. It would be well if Jude Kameen turned to thee now."

STEPHEN FANNIN AND JUDE KAMEEN

"His name should be Judas, mother."

"Don't be miscallin' the man. It's pitying him you should be for losing his horse."

"When he repents, and goes out and hangs himself, then I may pity him, mother."

"Mollie, Mollie," said her mother pitifully, "thou art a changed girl since thou took a notion of Stephen Fannin."

Ann was going to England for Stephen's trial, and Mollie determined to go with her. She had only two pounds of her own, and she asked her mother for more.

"Thou'rt mad, girl, to think of goin' to an English prison in that way; never one penny wilt thou get from me."

Mollie appealed to Betty.

"Lend my good money to take thee to prison to see a thief? 'Deed! then I will not." Mollie looked at Betty with great sorrow-laden eyes and said not a word. She put down her knitting and walked across the fields to seek Michael. He was in the barking house among the fishermen's nets.

"I want you to lend me three pounds, Michael. I'm goin' to Stephen, and mother and Betty won't help me."

"I'll go with thee, girl," he said kindly.

"No, Michael, I'm not wantin' that, but I must see Stephen."

"He'll get off, girl; they'll never hang the like of him; and there's lots of pardons going, even if they do transport him."

Mollie smiled. "Yes, Michael, God bless you, I am going to Australia to marry him, if they make him a convict."

Mollie and Ann went to England and heard the trial.

Stephen's counsel made a fine effort, but the evidence

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

against him was too strong to enable him to establish the prisoner's innocence.

Kameen and his housekeeper gave evidence. There was the broken window, the stolen stable key, the disappearance of the horse. Stephen said the horse was lent to him, that he had lost it, and wrote offering to make it good. Kameen said he had no such letter. Even Mollie had to give evidence. The prisoner had written to her, telling her of his journey to Liverpool and meeting Jude Kameen. Had he mentioned the lending of the horse? Mollie had to say "No." She declared vehemently that he was innocent, but she was not allowed to say more. The jury returned the verdict of Guilty, and Stephen Fannin was sentenced to be hanged. Ann fainted in Court, and Mollie called out: "If you hang him, you murder an innocent man." The sentence was afterwards commuted to transportation for twelve years. It was taken into account that it was a first offence, also that the prisoner was a respectable young man, and Mollie's beauty and absolute belief in Stephen had created an impression. Once Mollie was permitted to see him in prison. "I am coming to Australia to marry you, Stephen, and I shall try first to prove your innocence."

"You believe me, Mollie?"

"I know, Stephen."

"God bless you," he said. And so the lovers parted.

CHAPTER IX

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

“Come then to Mannin Veen,
House taxes there are almost nil,
Nor even thy servants will
Be counted.”

Manx Ballad.

“There’s pazonz—as greedy’s greedy.
See the tithes, see the fees, see the glebes and all;
What’s the call, for the lek?”

T. E. Brown.

§ i

MOLLIE returned from England, and even her mother and Betty were too much awed by her manner to make comments. Her mind was benumbed by the blow that had befallen her, but she soon began to make plans for Stephen. Could she get fresh evidence to establish his innocence? The lawyer had said that if Stephen’s letter to Jude Kameen was forthcoming, offering to pay for the lost horse, the trial would have had another issue. Knowing Jude Kameen, she felt sure he would destroy that letter. Where was the horse? Mollie was convinced that Jude had contrived to have it stolen. Could she discover the thief, and get him to confess? In any case she was going out to Australia; as a ticket-of-leave man Stephen might marry, and she would marry him. How was she to get to Australia? She must have money, and she must earn it. How? She might learn dressmaking and perhaps she could earn enough in two years

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

to pay her passage. She would ask Miss Fitzsimmons about learning dressmaking.

"Wantin' to go to Douglas is it? In my young days we was kept at spinning constant. Up with the dawn too, an' workin' till dusk. It's nothin' but wantin' away from home with young folks now. What dost thee want in Douglas?"

"I want thread, mother."

"Thou'lt get that in Castletown."

"We're wantin' a big pot lid. I can get it, mother."

"An' how wilt thee get to Douglas?"

"Walkin', mother, an' comin' home in the coach."

"Wearin' out shoe leather," grumbled her mother. "If you'd smile now an' then, Mollie, an' speak civil to Jude Kameen, you'd have a carriage to ride in."

"He is a bad man, a liar, mother."

"He was robbed by Stephen Fannin anyway."

"He was not, mother," and Mollie's eyes blazed. "The Lord will deal with Jude Kameen yet."

Mollie enjoyed her eight-mile walk, and quiet meditation over her problems. A pleasant picture she made in her brown print sprigged with pink, her muslin collar and ruffles, and her beautiful sombre face framed in the cottage bonnet. So thought Jude Kameen as he came face to face with her in Athol Street. His narrow face sharpened, a vein in his left temple stood out and throbbed. He looked nervous and ill at ease. "Good morning," he said pleasantly. "Are you not going to be friends with me now?"

Mollie glanced calmly at him. "Never," she said. "You are as wicked as the man named Judas who betrayed Jesus."

He flushed a dull red, the vein in his temple twitched, his hands trembled. "What do you mean?" he asked blustering.

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

"I mean," she said, "that by false swearing you have tried to murder an innocent man."

Jude Kameen seemed to shrink, his face became almost green in its pallor. "You assume a great deal," he said. "Do you set yourself up to know more than the English judge and jury?"

"Yes, Mr. Kameen, I do know more. What did you do with Stephen Fannin's letter?"

"Be careful now, it's libel you're talking, Miss Mollie, with your foolish notions. There was no letter."

"Who did you pay to steal the horse from Stephen?" went on Mollie.

"It's raving you are, sure enough," said Jude, but fear gripped at his heart. "Be reasonable now and friendly."

"Judas in the Bible went out and hanged himself, and the place was called the field of blood," Mollie said, gazing into his shifty eyes.

"Good-bye, Miss Mollie," he said nervously; "don't be libelling me now. I could have you punished."

Mollie smiled, and watched him cross the road and enter a public house. "The man's afraid," she thought to herself. "It is his guilty conscience."

Fear has a disastrous effect, and Jude trembled as he called for brandy, and tried to pull himself together. She had openly accused him of false swearing. Had she any evidence? Could Jerry Koteen give him away? Had anyone found Stephen's note? Was it only a shrewd guess? And he sat drinking and meditating in a state of abject terror.

Miss Fitzsimmons welcomed Mollie, and talked about Kitty's gown. "A garnet silk would suit you, Miss Christane."

"Prints and muslins are good enough for me."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"I'm sure you've money enough for silk."

"I want to earn money, not to spend it," said Mollie.

"How long would it take me to learn dressmaking?"

"A couple of years, if you are smart at fashions."

"Should I begin to earn money at once?"

"You might earn your keep the second year."

"Should I earn much when I knew the business?"

"Not much at all. It's not like the old times with the spinning wheel goin' constant. Farmers' daughters, ay! an' fishermen's too, are all takin' to dressmakin', an' spoiling the trade shockin' they are. There's no livin' to be made now with a dressmaker in every house, you may say. It's like sellin' brandy an' spirits. Every person is selling, an' there's no person left to buy."

Mollie looked disappointed. "'Deed, now, Miss Christane, I wouldn't be advisin' it. You're too old to begin. There's no money in dressmakin' at all."

Mollie thanked the little dressmaker, and turned her thoughts to teaching little children. She must consult old Mrs. Quilliam and Madame de Croix at Ballasalla.

§ ii

Mollie sat alone in her room at her books. Her mother and Betty were at Derbyhaven. The new silk gown had come home and they had gone "to get a sight of it." Mollie unlocked the little drawer of an oak bureau, and took out a French grammar with exercises. She carefully translated the French Exercise 47 into English. This she corrected by means of a key. Then she translated it back into French, and compared her translation with the original exercise.

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

The result pleased her ; and she put on her bonnet, took her books and ran across the field to Madame de Croix to read the exercise aloud to her. Madame had come to Ballasalla over thirty years ago, having escaped from Paris with her mother and infant son, for her father and husband had both been beheaded. They rented a small cottage and made a slender livelihood by teaching French, mending old lace, and starching fine linen caps and cravats. The mother and son had died long ago, and Madame was left alone. "I have no relation left in the world," she told Mollie, "and nowhere could I live as cheaply as here. My cottage costs me four shillings a month, and I grow my own vegetables and herbs. My hens provide me with eggs, and I get butter and bacon from the farmers' wives in return for starching their caps."

Mollie's French lessons cost her nothing ; but many a piece of honeycomb from her bees, or plump chicken from her henyard, found their way to Madame's larder. Mollie had endured much from her mother and Betty on account of her love of learning.

"Notions thou'rt takin'," laughed Betty. "Why dost thee want to learn things out of books, Mollie?"

"To know," replied Mollie quietly.

"It's ridiculous, so 'tis, things in books is mostly lies. Why waste thy time then?" said Betty.

"Because," said Mollie serenely.

Her mother was more emphatic. "There's no call for thee to learn a Papist language at all," she said ; "all this Papist French religion is against the Bible."

"I'm not learning the religion, mother, only the language."

"I never learnt any Papish language then, nor me mother,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

nor me grandmother, an' what's good enough for thy kin, is good enough for thee."

Mollie quoted the Manx proverb: "Learning is fine clothes for the rich man, and riches for the poor man."

Mrs. Christane first quarrelled with Mollie's Manx, which she amended, and then she scoffed at the proverb itself.

"An' what riches dost thee expect from thy bit of Papist French? Those that teaches gets little enough for it. Look at Madame de Croix, a body without an acre, an' no cattle at her at all. Ay! an' Kitty's fine mother-in-law, where would she be, but that she married a good Manx farmer? Her learnin' an' her silver dishes an' grand friends would never buy salt for her herrin's or her porridge either."

Mollie listened patiently; she had the grace of listening, a grace which often wins friends, for one is apt to love those who permit us to dogmatize without interruption.

"Old Mrs. Quilliam does not like herrings, mother."

"The more shame for her then. It's cocked up with dainties she is, an' Kitty's husband paying for it."

"Mrs. Quilliam has money of her own."

"Money of her husband's," corrected Mrs. Christane, "and money made by Michael's father. It's savin' it she should be for Kitty an' her children."

This altercation led far enough away from Mollie's studies; and Mollie continued to learn all she could, in spite of her mother's peevishness towards book-learning.

Mollie accepted the cup of coltsfoot tea Madame de Croix offered her, and proceeded to read her French exercise and a French fable aloud.

"You improve every day," praised Madame.

Mollie, pleased with the praise, was encouraged to ask, "Could I teach French to little children, Madame?"

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

"The rudiments, perhaps, my child. Ah! if you could go to Paris for one year to become proficient."

"I must earn money first," said Mollie soberly.

Meanwhile Mrs. Christane and Betty were on their way to Derbyhaven. As they stepped over the stile on to the beach the old lady eyed the place with an unfavourable eye. "It's untidy they are keeping this beach," she said. "It's not like the new roads we've got; but there's the good Manx smell of the sea, and the smell of pigs too, which is a wholesome smell."

There was much to be seen at Derbyhaven. Mrs. Christane inspected her daughter's herrings now packed neatly in coarse salt; criticized the hard salt conger and hake hanging in a row against the whitewashed walls in the backyard. "Mine's a better colour," she affirmed; "thee should use different salt, Kitty."

"I've some fine *bollin* for thee, mother," said Kitty, exhibiting the fish with their wonderful colours of purple and red lying in the straw basket. "Danny Kinvig brought them, an' see the lovely lobsters! I got Judy to boil them for thee. Danny is doin' well with his lobster pots, he was sayin'."

Meanwhile Betty sought Phrancis Parr, who was in the back parlour making the warm woollen winter blankets. The cloth was dark brown and red, and the double thickness was quilted. Phrancis was quilting while Betty watched and talked. Betty examined the brown cloth. "Is the cloth from thy own sheep?" she asked.

"Ay!" answered Phrancis, "an' a pretty colour the red is."

"What person did the weavin'?"

"Billy Callow the *fiddler* from the lil' cottage over Santon way. It's fine he weaves, too."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Yes," admitted Betty. "An' how many thick blankets are thee quiltin' for the winter?"

"Six, if there's cloth enough. Three lil' ones for the children's beds."

"Where's the baby to-day?"

"Asleep she is, upstairs in the room of the Misthress."

"An' where's the other children?"

"With ould Misthress Quilliam, it's tachin' them she is."

"It's a lot of teachin' the children want in these days," opined Betty.

"'Tis so," agreed Phrancie.

"An' have you seen the new silk gown, Phrancie?"

"I have so, Miss Christane, and the beautiful it is, fit for a queen."

Kitty called to Betty: "Come," she said, "we're goin' upstairs to see the silk gown."

"Where's mother?"

"She's upstairs singin' to baby Faith. The child wakened, an' she ought to sleep for three hours yet."

The sisters went upstairs to Kitty's room, with the two big windows facing the bay and overlooking the Fort Island. Granny was bending over the cradle. "Hush, *millish*, hush," she was saying, and she began to croon that sweet, haunting Manx hullaby that for centuries the island mothers have sung to hush their babes to sleep:—

"Ushag veg ruy my moanee doo,
Ushag veg ruy my moanee doo,
Ushag veg ruy my moanee doo,
C'raad chaddil oo riy syn oie?"
(Little red bird of the black turf ground,
Where did you sleep last night?)

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

Presently little Faith drowsed off to sleep.

"The little soul," said Kitty. "She likes the old song, mother."

"So did thou, an' Betty too. I always sang thee to sleep when thee were babies. What a gran' pincushion you've got, Kitty. What is it for?"

"It is for Faith, mother. Grandmamma Quilliam made it for her when she was born."

Granny Christane peered at the white satin cushion with the text, "For such is the Kingdom of Heaven," outlined thereon in tiny baby pins.

"*Shee bannee mee!* (Peace bless me)" quoth Granny with an acid smile. "I've heard lots of things about the Kingdom of Heaven in the church on Sunday; but I never heard before that it is like little pins. Is that what thy mother-in-law teaches thy children then?"

"No, mother, of course not," said Kitty with a vexed flush. "It means that little babies are like the Kingdom of Heaven. It says so in the Bible."

"When they've been christened, Kitty, but not before."

"Well, little Faith is christened, bless her heart! Faith Elizabeth, after her Aunt Betty."

"An' Betty's a better soundin' name than Faith. Names like Faith, Patience, an' the like, came in when the Roundie soldiers was in the islan'. I've heard me Granny say. It was after they killed the *Stanlagh Mooar*,* in England it was."

"What for was he killed, mother?" asked Kitty.

"For helping the King of England. Him Charles the Martyr in the Prayer Book," said the old woman; "an' then

* The great Stanley, James Earl of Derby, King of Man.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the next King of England shot *Illiam Dhone* on Hango Hill for savin' the Manx people."

"Ay!" said Kitty. "Kings do amazin' things. A mercy it is we have a Governor instead of a King, there's not so much killin' an' shootin' with a Governor," and while she was speaking Kitty was unfolding the wrappings of the silk gown. "There," she said. Betty was silent with admiration. She felt the silk, looked inside to see how the seams were finished off, held the silk near her own face to try the effect.

"It's the gown of a lady so 'tis," she exclaimed at last, "an' fine an' handsome you'll look in it, Kitty."

"It's for weddin's an' christenin's, an' church on fine Sundays," explained Kitty, flushed with pride.

"An' when thou'rt visitin' at the Governor's," said her mother dryly. "There'll be no more weddin's in the family, Kitty, till Dinah an' Dorcas is grown up, unless Betty takes a notion of a man. As for Mollie, it's a *bogh* she's makin' of herself over that Stephen Fannin; it's shockin' the things she says of Jude Kameen, miscallin' the man Judas an' all. It's ashamed I am of her, blamin' the man because Stephen Fannin is a thief."

Granny sighed. "There's nothin' but readin' Papish books with ould Madame de Croix, goin' to Douglas, an' collugin' with Ann Fannin. It's a changed girl she is to be sure."

"Wait till Mollie sees thy gown, Kitty," remarked Betty. "She'll be wantin' one like it, and she could have a dozen if she would marry Jude Kameen."

"Mollie 'ill never do that," grumbled her mother. "She goes her own way an' never takes heed of what I'm saying to her for her good."

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

§ iii

Mrs. Christane was peevish after her visit to Derbyhaven, and over the supper table she delivered herself.

"Those childer of Kitty's 'ill be ruined, so they will, with the genteel notions they're gettin' from ould Madame Quilliam; washed they must be before they'll eat their meat, an' pickin' their herrin' with a fork an' crust of bread; an' Matthew, poor boy, trying to say his prayers in Latin, an' little Bride copyin' him; an' refusin' to eat potatoes in the good Manx way, in their skins as God made them. I've no patience with the like. Dinah, sit up, child, like a little lady; an' go an' wash thy dirty hands before sittin' to thy meat; thy sisters at Derbyhaven are queens to thee, so they are."

Dinah retired discomfited. She returned in a moment. "Here's Pyee from Ballacrideen, Granny," she announced. "Sarah wants to know if she's to stay."

"Sit down to the table proper, and take thy bread and milk, child. Pyee can wait."

The supper was soon finished and Mrs. Christane and Betty repaired to the big back kitchen to hear the newses.

"Get some supper, Pyee, woman," she commanded. "Sarah, hurry, and give her a pot of tea. An' what's the news to-day, Pyee?"

"Aw! terrible bad, with the killing and fighting there is! Thousan's an' thousan's of the farmers, ma'am, have gone to the Bishop. Marching they are to Bishopscourt. It's the tithes, ma'am, tithes on the turmits an' pertaties" (turnips and potatoes).

"Ay! Pyee, an ungodly tithe it is, to be sure. Shame on the Bishop, a man of God too."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"With a big hand at him, Mrs. Christane, goin' snatching the livin' from the poor that way. But it's kilt the Bishop will be, ma'am, with the thousan's that are marching on him, with vengeance in them."

"It's likely they'll burn Bishops court to the ground, Pyee, but the tithes 'ill be took off. The Bishop cannot stand against all the Manx farmers in that way at all. Ah! the good an' kind the Bishop was when I was a child, an' the churches he built; and even to prison he went himself for the sake of the right."

"That would be the good Bishop Wilson, Mrs. Christane."

"Ah, it was, Pyee. I can just remember me mother holding me up to look at him."

"The ould days is gone, ma'am. Aw! but we'll never see the lek again."

"Never, Pyee, times is changing for the worse. It's from Ballacrideen you're come?"

"It is, ma'am, an' fine an' busy I was; what with the herrin's goin' salting, and the candles dippin'. I was busy as Trap's wife."

"An' what are they doin' there now?"

"It's jam they're making, an' a fine big family there are to eat it."

"How are they all?"

"Well, ma'am, all but the second son bein' quare like in his head; and the youngest girl pitted terrible with the smallpox. She almost died, so she did, all on account of not bein' 'nocolated like her sister."

"'Nocolation is a fine thing, I'm hearing."

"'Tis so, ma'am."

"And what's the news in Castletown?"

"Aw! shockin', ma'am; there's Passon Quine's son gone

THE TITHE ON TURNIPS

furrin he is ; an' they do be sayin' he's took money that's not his own, an' a good man the passon is."

"Ta boa vie my gha agh drogh they ee,"* said Mrs. Christane.

"Ay, indeed," said Pyee.

The clatter of horsemen riding by caused Betty and Dinah to run to the door to see what was happening. Presently Dinah ran in full of excitement. "Here's Mr. Kaighan of Gray Cross Farm ridin' from Peel, Granny."

"Ask him to step in, Dinah."

"He can't stop at all," said the child, "he's just givin' his horse a drink an' talkin' to Aunt Betty."

Mrs. Christane went to the door.

"Good evenin', Mr. Kaighan, an' what's the news?"

"Good, Mrs. Christane, good. The Bishop has took off the new tithes for this year."

"It's well he's done it," said the lady dourly.

"For this year only, he says," called Mr. Kaighan.

"An' for every other year, too ; the man's not in his senses to try to make people pay such a tithe."

"Deed, but you're right, ma'am. The Bishop's life was in danger, with the farmers all raging at him."

"The tithe was ridiculous," quoth Mrs. Christane.

"'Twas, ma'am, a shockin' tithe altogether," said Mr. Kaighan, riding away.

* Many a good cow hath but a bad calf."—*Manx proverb.*

CHAPTER X

MOLLIE IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

“Soft and loving is her soul,
Swift and lofty soaring;
Mixing with its dove-like dole
Passionate adoring.
She is steadfast as a star,
And yet the maddest maiden,
She can wage a gallant war,
And give the peace of Eden.”

G. Meredith.

§ i

It was Sunday morning. Quite early the Quilliam family were astir. Matthew, in his Sunday attire, had escaped to the back garden and had made a trap to catch sparrows with a riddle and a garden rake. Bride was crying at the door because Matthew showed her how he meant to cut off the sparrows' heads, to make a sparrow pie. “Don't be heedin' him, *chree*,” said kind Susan. “He'll catch no sparrows at all. Come thy ways in, child.”

In the big front kitchen Dorcas and Rosaleen were toasting piles of bread and singing in clear young voices, “Welcome, sweet day of rest.” Upstairs Phrancis Parr was dressing Patience in a new linen frock with pretty buttons. “It fits thee right enough, child,” said Phrancis.

“I like new clothes, Phrancis. I should like to have new clothes every day.”

“Run, child, and show thyself to the Maſther, and may be you'll get a penny to put into the pocket of it.”

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

Michael stood at his looking-glass tying his cravat

"See, Dadda, my new frock."

"And a fine little girl you look in it," he said.

"See the pretty pocket, Dadda?"

"And nothing in it. Here, child, is a silver groat for the pocket."

Patience blushed with pride and pleasure.

"If I had only one little girl instead of six," went on Michael, "she should have a new frock every Sunday."

"And a silver groat as well, Dadda?"

"Ay, and a silver groat as well."

Patience, overwhelmed by the magnificence of this prospect, walked soberly away, wishing that all her sisters would die of cholera or smallpox, so that she herself might revel in splendour and riches. She was very fond of money, but she liked her sisters too; and a vision of five little graves in Malew churchyard with headstones bearing the names of Dinah, Dorcas, Rosaleen, Bride and Faith, saddened her for an instant. She consoled herself with the thought of Matthew, "and boys don't want frocks," she said to herself. "I should deck their graves with flowers every week," was her further reflection, "like little Mary the faithful"—a heroine in a Sunday book Kitty had read to the children. In a holy mood Patience entered the kitchen and demanded the toasting fork. "You put the butter on, Dorcas, and let me toast," she ordered.

And Dorcas acquiesced in this arrangement.

"Don't soil thy new frock," warned Susan.

Bride sat on a stool staring at the ceiling. "Why is Sunday red?" she asked.

"It isn't any colour at all; days don't have colours," said Patience.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Days do have colours, and Sunday is red," persisted Bride, pointing to the ceiling. "Don't you see it?"

"See what, my pet?" asked Kitty, who entered blooming in her Sunday garments, protected by a big apron.

"Sunday on the ceiling. See, Mamma, it always hangs there on Sundays."

"There is nothing there but the hams, child; come eat thy bread and milk."

"Bride tells stories," declared Patience.

"What is it you see on the ceiling, Bride?" coaxed her mother.

"A big letter 'A' hanging to the ceiling. It is red, and it hangs by the biggest ham, there," pointed Bride. "It is always there on Sunday morning; every day has a colour, you know," and the child was flushed with her eagerness to convince them.

"What colour is Monday?" questioned Matthew stolidly.

"Yellow, like a primrose, of course."

"Is it on the ceiling, too?"

"No, it is sometimes on the little dresser."

"What colour is Friday, then?" asked sceptical Patience.

"Friday is the colour of the mountains, like blue with a veil over it. Friday is very big."

Kitty was troubled. "Don't be asking foolish questions, children," she said, "and Bride, don't be telling stories."

"It isn't stories," wept Bride; "look, Mamma, a big red 'A' hanging by the top."

"Eat your breakfast, child, and don't be looking at it."

"The child sees things that other folks don't see," Kitty said to Michael. "It frightens me to hear her at times; and foolish things she sees, like red 'A's' hanging on the ceiling on Sundays."

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

"She will grow out of it," said tolerant Michael.

"It is as if she were half simple at times ; yet Grandmamma says she is very clever."

"Yes," agreed Michael, "but Patience has more sense ; a cute little maid is Patience."

"They are all good children, Michael."

"Yes, good enough ; but I wish Matthew could learn as quick as little Bride, though I don't hold with her telling stories at all."

"But the child does see things, Michael, an' she isn't a changeling at all, either ; changelings are mostly skin an' bone an' ugly faces at them."

Kitty had little book-learning, not much imagination, and she had never heard of psychology ; but her mother instinct taught her that Bride had unusual powers, therefore she cherished rather than blamed her.

"It would be better for Matthew to have brains rather than Bride. Women don't want learning at all," said Michael.

"Yes, Michael. Look at our Mollie, always readin' an' learning French, too."

"Mollie's got good looks ; there's nothing better for a woman."

"If she would marry a rich man and forget Stephen," mourned Kitty.

"I never did think much of Kameen, and I'm glad Mollie won't look at him," declared Michael.

"But see the rich he is," lamented Kitty.

Before ten o'clock the whole of the Quilliam family started off to Malew Church—a three-mile walk. Michael and Kitty led the way, and the children followed with Judy and Susan. Pete drove Grandmamma and Bride in the

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

gig. Only Phrancis Parr and Faith remained at home, and Phrancis prepared the cold sabbath meal. Bride sat high up on a cushion beside her mother; and through the half-opened door at the end of the aisle she could see the gold of the gorse, the stooks of corn in the Big Meadow fields, the white clouds, the gulls wheeling around, and beyond was the blue sea; for in a small island the colour and sound of the sea are ever with you.

Bride loved to look through the open door during the Litany. "That it may please Thee to restore and continue to us the blessings of the sea," read the parson. "Blessings of the sea," mused the child; "that means gulls and the pretty blue colour on a sunny day, and the sun"; for Bride, who saw the sun come out of the sea every morning, from her bedroom window, believed that the sun lived in the sea, and came out every fine day. It was not till long afterwards she learned that "the blessings of the sea" meant the fish, which left the coast at times, and impoverished the people; and she experienced the momentary sadness of another lost illusion. It was Communion Sunday. Michael walked home with the rest of his family while Grandmamma and Kitty stayed for Communion, keeping little Bride to drive home with them. "Be very still," cautioned Kitty to Bride, "just like a little mouse, and kneel on the hassock all the time." When her mother and grandmamma went up to the Communion table, Bride peeped over the top of the pew to see what the cup was like. "I shall hold it and drink out of it when I am big like mother," she said, and she thrilled at the thought of handling the fairy cup. She had never told her mother of the wonderful fascination this cup had for her; she was learning to be reticent already about her inmost thoughts. Most of us lose the curious

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

powers which are sometimes given to the very young, before we are old enough to talk reasonably about them; but some rare ones retain to maturity the infantile soul-life which brims their eyes with the richest hues.

§ ii

Mollie made an early opportunity to visit Kitty. She wanted to talk to old Mrs. Quilliam. She found her sister peeling mushrooms, and she sat in the big kitchen window overlooking the bay and the Fort Island and helped with the peeling. "I'm keeping all the big ones for Michael," prattled Kitty. "He likes mushrooms better than most things; even Grandmamma likes mushrooms. They are very genteel food, like oysters, which I never could abide. But the grander the person, the more they like the food the poor is despisin'."

"Yes," said Mollie listlessly.

"The children are at their lessons with Grandmamma. It's wonderful the things they learn. Mother's too old-fashioned to understand. Dorcas has made a sampler fit for any lady in the land to see, an' Patience can help Matthew with his sums in a way that 'ud make you wonder, an' Rosaleen can make pencil pictures of old castles just like real, far prettier they are than Peel Castle and Castle Rushen, an' as for little Bride, the child's a marvel. She can read anythin', an' say Latin, and she sees things that are not there. She is a wise child in a kind of way."

"When their lessons are over I'd like to step in and see old Mrs. Quilliam, Kitty," said Mollie, who listened languidly to the mother's prattle.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Do, Mollie, you are a favourite with her, and she likes visitors."

"When shall I go, Kitty?"

"After dinner; be very genteel, and put on your gloves. I'll let her know you're coming, and she'll ask you to tea."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"I'm wanting you to take the children blackberrying, Mollie. There's lots to be got in the lane by the Big Meadow at Malew; no person gathers them, and they are nearly over now."

"When shall I take them, Kitty?"

"One day at the end of the week; I'll send you word."

Old Mrs. Quilliam welcomed Mollie graciously. "You will take tea with me," she said. "Nay, I will take no denial."

"Thank you, ma'am."

"Excuse me, Miss Mollie, if I admire your complexion. It is the colour of a delicate white rose. Many a duchess would give a fortune to have it. May I ask you a delicate question?"

"To be sure."

"Would you tell me what you use? In spring now, the most trying time for young ladies' skins?"

"Use?" said perplexed Mollie, "to wash my face, you mean; just yellow soap an' the water that drips from the roof into the big barrel."

"Wonderful, Miss Mollie, and yet people say that soap brings wrinkles. Do be careful with the use of soap."

Mollie laughed. "Brada Crageen," she said, "has been to London, and she heard there that the ladies didn't use soap. She just puts cold cream on her face, and wipes it

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

off with an old flannel petticoat ; but indeed, Mrs. Quilliam, it makes no difference. Her skin is middlin' coarse."

"My dear, flannel would irritate any skin. Admiral Pennfeather used to stay at the dear Bishop's with his two lovely daughters, with skins as fine and transparent as a baby's. He used to make them drink a glass of good ale every morning before breakfast to preserve it."

"How very odd ; buttermilk is a good thing now ; and I keep a bowl by me sometimes, but Betty always throws it away."

"Your skin, my dear, is a credit to the soft Isle of Man climate, and the little dimple in your chin would be worth a fortune to you in London."

Mollie blushed under this praise. "I have to ask your advice," she said ; "would you advise me ? Indeed, I need help."

"My dear, I will do my best."

"I am thinkin' of goin' to England," she said, "as a children's governess ; I must earn money."

Mrs. Quilliam looked at her thoughtfully. "Always sound your final g's, my child. Careless speech is a distressing habit, and the Manx are often careless."

"I will try to remember," said Mollie blushing.

"You have a quiet manner, and a pleasing way with children, Miss Mollie. What could you teach ?"

"Not much," said Mollie humbly. "Not music, or painting, or drawing ; but I could teach little children to read and write. I know the chronology of the Kings of England ; a little English grammar. I can repeat some of the speeches in Shakespeare's plays, and do a little arithmetic. I know the Catechism, and Collects, and a little French."

"French," said the old lady, "is important. Oblige me,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Miss Mollie, by reading this fable to me." And she handed Mollie the French reading book she used with Dorcas.

Crimson with shyness and effort, Mollie complied.

"A very fair pronunciation, my dear; how did you learn?"

"From an old French lady at Ballasalla."

"Go on learning. Have you read any literature, poetry, or romance?"

"A little of Byron, from selections. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *Gaston de Blondville*."

"And did you like these works?"

"Yes," said Mollie eagerly, "that beautiful journey in the Pyrenees impelled me to buy an atlas, just to trace the journey; and *Gaston de Blondville* made me long to see Warwick and that wonderful ruin at Kenilworth. I have learnt some history from these works, and the ways of Kings, Queens, and Courts."

Mrs. Quilliam smiled. "Where do you get your books?"

"Brada Crageen lent me *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and an old woman who makes ointments and charms gave me *Gaston de Blondville*; she got it from Crellin the baker, who took it with some other old books and a mirror for a bad debt."

"Dear me, that is a precarious way of getting books."

"Not many people care for books in the island except the gentlefolks; and in Douglas I'm told they read all the books that's printed mostly."

"I will lend you *The Children of the Abbey*, and a pretty refined work by Miss Austen. It is about Bath, and it shows the kind of books young ladies in society read."

"Thank you," said Mollie gratefully.

"You would make quite a nice teacher in a school, my

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

dear ; but with individuals in a family your range of studies is not sufficiently extensive. Read all you can, study French diligently ; and do not neglect your final g's."

Mollie promised ; she felt encouraged and almost happy.

"My dear," said the old woman as Mollie was leaving her, "try to influence your sister to give her children a good education. She is a good mother, but not so intelligent as you, and Michael is indifferent. It is Matthew I'm thinking of. I should like him to be ordained like my dear father."

"Yes," said Mollie. "Matthew is not meant for a scholar, I'm afraid."

The old lady sighed. "There are more ways than one of becoming a clergyman," she said, "and I fear Matthew must take the back-door way."

§ iii

After infinite pains Mollie procured a recent copy of a Liverpool newspaper and scanned its pages eagerly. There was an account in it of the funeral of Lord Byron, with a thin black line all around it. Mollie was thrilled, and felt somehow more in touch with the great world outside the Isle of Man.

She glanced through the advertisements, and learned how the fast-sailing steam packet *Albion* from Ireland called for passengers every week at Douglas, and how the Royal Mail sailed every Monday. She also read of the New Champion Coach making the journey from Liverpool to London in twenty-eight hours and landing the passengers at "The Swan With Two Necks," Lad Lane. "Like

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

flying," she said to herself, and she wished she could go in the New Champion Coach to London, and find some great kind man like Wellington, and get him to help Stephen. Then she read the following: "Mrs. Boys teaches elegant handwriting without lines, one guinea. Pen-making, one guinea. English grammar, one guinea. Pianoforte, one guinea. An assistant teacher wanted." Mollie considered. "I could teach handwriting without lines, though, to be sure, it is easy enough to make very fine lines and then rub them out; and I can make pens, and can get plenty of goose-quills."

She read further: "In respectable Seminary for young ladies, a teacher qualified to assist in French, English Grammar and Geography. References for respectability and ability expected. Apply Printers. Letter post paid." Mollie weighed every word. "I am respectable," she thought. "I can assist in French, I know a little English grammar, and I can learn more if I pay Mrs. Boys one guinea for lessons. I can learn geography out of a book, and I have got an atlas already." Such was Mollie's slender equipment for the position of teacher to young ladies; but she had zest for learning and plenty of goodwill, and after all goodwill is almost everything in the battle of life. Then she mused on references. "Madame de Croix and Parson Quine of Malew would do. It would cost a lot to live in Liverpool; but perhaps she might live at the school. She would save every penny. Perhaps her mother might give her a bit of woven Manx cloth to make a new gown." So ran Mollie's thoughts. What did Phœbe Fell tell her? To come back in thrice seven days and ask one question. Well, it was more than thrice seven days, but perhaps Phœbe could give her some advice. She would try.

IN SEARCH OF A LUCRATIVE CALLING

She put on her bonnet, and announced that she was going to Castletown.

"An' bring a dozen crabs ; Sarah says Joe Kewley has plenty," said her mother.

"Choose the little crabs, Mollie, not the big he-ones at all," counselled Betty. "Those are the ones to sell to strangers. There's no right eatin' in them."

"An' call at Bobby Oates for mee new pattens, an' then go to the Rope Walk for a stout rope. It's a clothes line I'm wantin'."

"Yes, mother."

"An' bring home some peppercorns and ginger for pottin' the herrings. Go to Cubbons for it."

Mollie accepted all her commissions meekly. She walked quickly and hastened through with her errands, then she sought Phœbe Fell in Queen Street. The old woman was knitting at her doorway looking seaward. The shimmering water, sapphire blue, tumbled rhythmically against the low-lying rocks. Far beyond Knockrushen Farm was Scarlet House, solid and isolated, and further on the flat limestone rocks and the lime kilns.

"It's stockin's I'm making," said Phœbe, "the couth (cold) from the sea is terrible in winter."

"It is pretty from here," said Mollie, looking seawards.

"Deed, so," agreed Phœbe. "There's gold on the cushag there,"* and she pointed to the waste spaces along the shore where the cushag—ragwort—blazed in golden patches. "It's a beautiful lil' islan', so it is, with the corn an' the cushags, an' gorse an' lil' yellow toad-flaxes runnin' over the hedges, there's no place like it."

* Manx proverb.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Perhaps not," agreed Mollie.

"Good an' wholesome is yellow flowers," went on Phœbe. "I always hang them over the dour (door), so that no evil spirits can come in."

"Mother hangs a bit of gorse over the doorway to keep out bad fairies ; but Phœbe, can you answer me the question now ?"

"I might then," said the old woman, looking at Mollie curiously. "It's with the sword-cards you are now, Miss Mollie, but the cup-cards is comin', keep a good heart."

Mollie smiled wanly ; and Phœbe produced the Tarot cards and laid them on the table. "Now," she said, "ask me one question."

Mollie hesitated. "I want to know if, by leaving the island now, it will do good to me, and one dear to me ?"

Phœbe returned to her study of the cards.

"The swords is thick on thee, an' thick on the man that's near ye ; an' it's changing your life, ay', an' your country too, but changes bring you nearer to the cup cards. Ay ! an' the sceptres an' pentacles is there too. Yis, yis, you must go, chile, an' a long journey's before ye."

"What are sceptres and pentacles, Phœbe ?"

"Signs, just signs ; they mean money, carriages, an' jewels an' agriculture, creation, an' good trade."

"And happiness, Phœbe ?"

"The cup cards brings ye happiness, love, an' butiful children ; an' they are crowdin' on ye, but not yet, not yet."

"Then I must go, Phœbe ?"

"Ay ! it's the only way, child, to the cup cards, anyway."

CHAPTER XI

WILLIAM DHONE

“Great Scarlet in wealth, who dwelt down by the bay,
Must toil now with paupers for sixpence a day;
And oft as I’ve heard, has no morsel to chew;
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

“So it fared with the band, by whom Willie did die;
Their lands are at waste, their names stink to the sky;
They melted like rime in the ruddy sun’s glow.
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.”

Manx Ballad, trans. by G. Barrow.

§ i

“It’s goin’ to be middlin’ fine,” said Granny Christane.
“Art thee ready, Dinah? Don’t tear thy clothes, an’ don’t
be quarrelling with Patience. She is younger than thee.”

“I don’t quarrel with Patience, Granny.”

“Be a good girl, then, an’ help Aunt Mollie with the little
ones.”

The children were going blackberrying in a lane near the
Big Meadow, by Malew Church. Aunt Mollie was going
with them.

Pete drove up with the five children from Derbyhaven,
each carrying a basket, and Granny surveyed her handsome
grandchildren with pride.

“I’ve brought a rake, Granny,” said Matthew, “to get
the big ones high up.”

“Well done,” approved Granny. In her heart the old
woman loved Matthew more than anything in the world.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"I'm going to give my blackberries to you, Granny."

"A good lad thou'rt, Matthew," said proud Granny. "Mollie, I'll be sendin' old Jenny with the donkey cart to carry store for the picnic."

"Yes, mother," acquiesced Mollie.

"Betty, pack thou barley cakes with plenty of butter, an' hard-boiled eggs, the big currant cake, an' the stone jar full of milk; an' Patience, don't thee be quarrelling with Dinah, mind."

"I don't quarrel," affirmed Patience. "I've got a new frock," she confided importantly to Dinah.

"You needed one," was Dinah's unkind comment.

"An' where will Jenny an' the ass be findin' you then?" asked Betty.

"In the lane beyond Malew Church, near the Big Meadow; there's blackberries there to feed a regiment," said Mollie.

The lane was indeed a treasure; and the children shouted with glee as they filled their baskets. Matthew climbed on the stone fence and thrashed the topmost branches. Dinah gathered her basket full quickly; then she sat down, and fanned herself vigorously with a bunch of dock leaves. "There's no person been here picking at all," she observed.

"Don't say 'no person,'" said Patience, critically.

"Why not?" and Dinah fixed her eyes on Patience's dusty boots and smiled. Patience wilted; she always felt inferior in the matter of dress when Dinah was there.

"Because it's vulgar," she said grandly, preening herself on her superior diction.

Dinah crimsoned. "You rude little girl. Granny says person, so does Mamma, an' it says person in the Prayer Book, an' in the notices on the church door, so there."

"It isn't good grammar."

ILLIAM DHONE

"I'm eleven and almost grown up. You are six. What grammar do you know?"

"I'm almost seven and Grandmamma says that it is vulgar to say 'person.'"

"You must not quarrel, children," said Mollie, mildly.

"Patience tries to be fine an' English," complained Dinah.

"I don't, then," wailed Patience, "but I don't say 'person.'"

Dinah never forgot this rebuke, and to the day of her death she never used the word in the same way again. They were all hungry when Jenny came with the hamper, and Mollie selected a sunny bank soft with stonecrop and sweet with wild thyme; here they sat, but Matthew persisted in bestriding the donkey, and eating his lunch in that position. They ate till they could eat no more, and Matthew, proclaiming that he was "full," rolled off the donkey and lay in the sun on the turf clamouring for a story. "Illiam Dhone, Illiam Dhone," he shouted. "Yes, Illiam Dhone," agreed the girls.

Mollie began: "He was William Christian of Ronaldsway, and a beautiful garden he had, and a fine house fit for any gentleman, and good land. He was the head man of the Isle of Man, and the Earl, the great Stanley, loved him well. He was wise and good and gentle and all the people loved him too; but, children, there were wicked men who hated him; and envy and spite an' malice will destroy any man; and their envy murdered *Illiam Dhone*, the fair-haired William that the people loved so well.

"He lived in troubled times, for the English people were wickedly fighting against their King, the good King Charles the Martyr; and the great Stanley was in England fighting for the King. The Roundie soldiers came to the island in

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

ships, and landed at the Fort Island. They were very cruel soldiers, the Roundies ; they used to sing a psalm, then murder a thousand innocent folks, and sing another psalm. It was a way they'd been taught to murder in England by a wicked man called Cromwell.

Now the Roundies put the Countess of Derby in prison in Castle Rushen, and William Christian had either to let the Manx people all be murdered, or to give up the keys of the island to the soldiers ; and he saved the people and gave up the island ; and for eight years, these wicked Roundie soldiers ruled in the Isle of Man ; Granny's grandmother remembered them stealing the people's chickens, an' takin' their sheep, an' frightening the children terrible. And Cromwell went on killing Kings, Earls an' the like until there was hardly any more to kill. He killed the King Charles the Martyr ; and he killed our great Stanley, an' thousands of others an' he took their land, houses, an' cattle ; a greedy murdering villain of a man he was. Then he died, an' there came another King Charles, and everybody was pardoned and everybody was happy. Then the wicked people who hated *Illiam Dhone* and wanted the beautiful Ronaldsway for themselves got up a plot against him. The folks who lived at The Friary, and at Scarlet, and at the Creggins, and others as well, said he was a bad man to give up the Isle of Man to the Roundie soldiers. And they had a trial. They hired false witnesses ; and put only wicked men to judge him—it was called a packed jury—and there were no honest men in court. They condemned that innocent, noble man to be shot on Hango Hill." Mollie was weeping now, weeping for Stephen and the memory of William Christian of Ronaldsway. Bride and Rosaleen wept, too, in sympathy.

ILLIAM DHONE

"Lawyers an' judges," went on Mollie, "can make white look black ; and they can condemn the best people to death, as the Jews condemned Jesus Christ."

"Tell us about the shooting," interrupted Matthew.

"It was New Year's day, and they took him to Hango Hill and put blankets on the ground for him to stand on."

"Why?" Patience wanted to know.

"Blood," said Mollie, "must never fall upon the bare ground, especially innocent blood. Then he made a speech, a beautiful speech. He said he was innocent, an' that it was an unjust trial ; an' people crowded round to hear him from all parts, all weeping and wailing. Then he pinned a piece of paper over his heart, and told the soldiers to shoot there."

"There were six soldiers to shoot him," prompted Matthew.

"Yes, six soldiers, and they wouldn't shoot him at all," went on Mollie. "Some of them fired in the air, some of them fired on the ground, but one man, William McCowle, fired in the right place and shot him dead. 'As dy vaase, Illiam Dhone, te brishey nyn gree'" ("Thy death, Illiam Dhone, 'tis that breaks our heart"—Manx ballad), concluded Mollie with streaming eyes, breaking into Manx.

"And the people all crowded to dip handkerchiefs in his blood," added Dinah.

"Yes," said Mollie, "they treasured the blood of the martyr for years ; it brought them good fortune."

"I've been in Ronaldsway ; and in his oak parlour where he wrote letters," boasted Matthew.

"I've gathered lavender in Ronaldsway garden," said Rosaleen.

"I've seen them milk cows in his stable," declared Patience.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"William Christian," went on Mollie, "was buried in the Chancel of Malew Church; and always in Church on Sunday, you should think of our greatest Manx man, who lived at Derbyhaven."

The children promised eagerly to do so. "And when you pass Hango Hill, stop a moment and say, 'Thank God for Illiam Dhone.'"

"I always do," said Dinah. "Granny told me to."

"And oh, children, it was all so wrong and so unnecessary. The King Charles had sent to say that he was not to be shot; and one man had the letter in his boot all the time; but there are wicked people in the world who like to harm innocent men, not only in the days of Illiam Dhone, but now, now." Mollie was very earnest.

The children looked awed. "And what was done to the wicked men?" asked Matthew, yearning for retribution.

"The new Earl of Derby was rebuked by the English King; the Deemsters were fined and imprisoned; but it was too late; nothing could bring him back. And the wicked men who got Ronaldsway from him, had after a time to give it back to his sons; and, children, the Christian family live and thrive in the Isle of Man now; but the Colcads and the Tyldesleys and the Norrises are all gone and ruined and there is not one left in the island. They were the men who swore falsely against him. The Colcads were rich, they had fine houses, they lived at the Nunnery in Douglas; one of them, Robin, died a cripple, one, Richard, went down in a ship. Evil happened to them all."

"If I met a boy named Colcad, I'd fight him," said Matthew fiercely.

"But there will never be one," declared Mollie, "and the great wealthy people at Scarlet died of poverty and hunger;

ILLIAM DHONE

they worked like paupers for sixpence, and had not a bite to put in their mouths."

"I'm glad," declared Patience.

"Granny can say it all in Manx," said Dinah.

"Say it in English," begged Bride.

And Mollie repeated a free translation of one of the concluding verses :—

"So it fared with the band, by whom Willie did die ;
Their lands are a waste, their names stink to the sky ;
They melted like rime in a ruddy sun's glow :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe."

Such was Mollie's version of the tragedy of the Manx patriot ; historians mutter darkly of "the other side," and pretend to weigh evidence. They condone the murderers ; but the simple Manx folk who adored their fair-haired William, told the story as Mollie told it, and as it had come down from eye-witnesses.

"Why, Bride, what are you doing in the ditch ?" she asked.

"I'm findin' something. It's a cup, a fairy cup," and the child displayed a small, round metal cup black with age and dirt.

"I think it is silver," said Mollie, scratching it.

"It is like the fairy cup the farmer got from the fairies at Malew," Bride insisted.

"Granny was mightily interested in the cup. "The farmer's cup was given to Malew Church," she said, "but lost it was, long ago. The passon was tellin' me that 'twas lost a hundred years ago ; an' this found in the ditch near the church. 'Tis the very cup, child. Ay ! but thou'rt a

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

lucky little one ; an' lucky thou'lt be to the end of thy days. Mollie, go home with the children. Tell Kitty to take particular care of this cup. See, it polishes amazin' with a bit of wash-leather ! 'Tis no mortal cup at all. It must be shown to the passon. But it is Bride's cup, and must be kept for her. 'Twill bring thee luck, child."

§ ii

Mollie drove the children and their blackberries home, and delivered the cup to Kitty ; and great was the excitement it caused in the household. It was truly a fairy cup and Michael must show it to Passon Quine. It is true that Grandmamma discovered a mark on it, with the aid of a magnifying glass. She said it was probably a wine-taster of the reign of Queen Anne ; but this opinion was received with coldness. When Mollie left Kitty's house she went on her way to the little islet in Derbyhaven Bay known as the Fort Island because of the circular embattled fort erected by James, the seventh Earl of Derby, as a protection to the harbour. The island was only an island at high tide, and Mollie skipped nimbly across the boulders and reached the ruins of the tiny church. Very ancient was the little church ; built of limestone, with the east window of small pieces of schist, set edgeways round the arch. It was rudely erected, apparently without any tool. The length of the chapel was only thirty feet, and the breadth fourteen. Under the east window was a stone altar, and here Mollie knelt praying for Stephen's safety, and that his innocence should be established. " It hath pleased Thee, Almighty God," she prayed aloud, " to allow Thy servant Stephen Fannin of the parish

ILLIAM DHONE

of Malew, to be accused wrongfully, even as it pleased Thee to permit Thy servant William Christian of Ronaldsway to suffer death wrongfully ; but I beseech Thee to keep Stephen Fannin in safety ; to mitigate his sufferings in the convict ship, to find him friends, to allow me to marry him ; and if it please Thee, help me to establish his innocence. Amen."

Only the gulls heard, as they rested on the roofless walls of the little church ; and without, the waves broke against the craggy coastline of the islet. Every week Mollie came here and prayed aloud for Stephen. Her own parish church was to her the place for decorous worship on the sabbath day ; and this deserted church on a desolate uninhabited island seemed a fitting place to offer up her prayers of urgent appeal.

For a long time she knelt at the rude stone altar. Nettles and docks grew around her ; and the wind howled in the little church, which for centuries had been a ruin. It had not been used as a place of worship since the monks had been driven from the Abbey at Ballasalla. It was a relic of an earlier form of worship ; but it suited Mollie's needs. Alone in this desolate place, where a few sheep cropped the scanty herbage, and the wild birds screamed aloft, Mollie felt nearer to her Maker than in any conventional church. It was getting late ; the tide was coming in, and she arose from her knees and made her way across the boulders to the mainland. She stopped sometimes to admire the crimson, brown, and yellow stonecrops, and the beautiful chrome-coloured lichens on the rocks ; and to gather a few slender-stalked harebells growing on the springy turf. She picked the mushrooms that came in her way, like all thrifty Manx folk, planning to fry them with butter and parsley as a relish for supper ; but she did these things mechanically,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

for all the time she was thinking of Stephen, and looking forward to the time when they would be re-united.

§ iii

Meanwhile Mrs. Christane of Ballasalla had a visitor, no less a person than Mr. Jude Kameen himself. He came on horseback, and tied his horse to the block in the courtyard. Betty received him with a smile.

"Good evenin', Mr. Kameen."

"Good evenin', Miss Christane. Is thy mother within?"

"She is. Step in, Mr. Kameen. Step in, sir."

Mrs. Christane was at her spinning wheel. On the whole she was glad that Mollie was not at home.

"Sit thee down, Mr. Kameen," she said.

"It's fine weather for the time of year, Mrs. Christane."

"'Tis so, sir, an' the Bishop got no tithe on the turnips at all."

Mr. Kameen laughed. "The farmers were too much for him, ma'am, an illegal tithe it was."

And so the polite conversation trickled on.

"I've come, ma'am," said Mr. Kameen at last, depositing his tall rabbit-skin hat on the floor beside him, "to talk to you about my mother."

"Ay! I knew her well. Bessie Quine she was, in the ould days."

"She often used to speak of you," said Mr. Kameen, with an attempt at a smile on his foxy face. "You went to school with her."

"Ay! to a sewing-school in Castletown."

"My mother had a great regard for you, Mrs. Christane,

ILLIAM DHONE

and just before she died she wished to make you a present."

"'Tis the first time I've known Bessie Quine wanting to make presents to anybody," thought Mrs. Christane, but she said pleasantly, "'Twas kind of her, indeed."

"She had an old lacquer cabinet, ma'am, a seventeenth century cabinet, with big brass hinges, an' a lot of little drawers inside, an' seaweed and patterns in red an' gold runnin' all over it."

"I mind it well," said Mrs. Christane, a little grimly. "'Twas me grandmother's, she used to keep honey in it when I was a chile. Me grandfather brought it from foreign parts, an' then me mother had it."

"To be sure," agreed Mr. Kameen. "It was bought at a sale of your mother's things, and my mother thought you ought to have it."

"It was a kind thought, sir," said Mrs. Christane.

"The cabinet passed into the possession of my uncle, Mr. Nathaniel Quine," went on Mr. Kameen, "and owing to his recent death it has come to me. I hope you will allow me, ma'am, to carry out my mother's wishes and give it to you."

Mrs. Christane was taken aback. It was not the custom for the Manx to give such presents to each other. A pair of lobsters, a basket of mushrooms, a dozen eggs, these were common enough; but a lacquer cabinet was another thing, and the Manx are a proud people.

She replied a little stiffly, "If thee will allow me to buy the cabinet, Mr. Kameen, it would please me."

"May I not have the pleasure of giving it?" he asked.

"If, sir, you allowed me to give the price that was paid for it, I'd take it gladly."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Mr. Kameen was annoyed ; he wanted to ingratiate himself with Mollie's family. He feared Mollie, and wondered how much she really knew. If her mother could be induced to use pressure, now that Stephen was out of the way, and Mollie became his, he could watch her, and she could do him no harm ; but her boldness and certainty of his guilt frightened him.

"There's no tellin'," he said, "what was paid for it."

"Then, sir, I fear I cannot take it."

"Look here, Mrs. Christane, your butter is excellent, I'm told. Now suppose you supply me with butter, say two pounds a week, would that suit you as payment for the cabinet ?"

"For how long, sir ?"

"For as long as you like ; shall we say six months ?"

Mrs. Christane made a rapid calculation. Butter at sixpence, that made a shilling a week for twenty-six week. That was twenty-six shillings ; and the cabinet was very old, even in her childhood. She happened to remember that twenty-two and sixpence was paid for the old thing. But it had been her grandmother's and her heart warmed to it.

"It's middlin' old," she said. "Shall we say twenty weeks ?"

"Anything you like, ma'am," agreed Mr. Kameen. "I'd be glad to give it to you, for me mother's sake."

And so it was agreed. "I'll be sendin' it in a few days, Mrs. Christane ; an' how is Mollie ?"

"She's middlin'," replied Mrs. Christane, warily.

"I met her in Douglas ; it's pale she's lookin'."

"She's been fretting a bit for Stephen Fannin."

Mr. Kameen pulled a long face. "A distressin' matter,

ILLIAM DHONE

ma'am ; to break into a man's house and steal a man's horse is a criminal offence ; but I'm glad they did not hang the rascal."

" Ay ! indeed, but Mollie'll forget him in time."

" Do you think so, Mrs. Christane ? "

" I do, indeed."

" Then I hope she will look kindly on me some day."

" There's no tellin' what she may do."

And Mr. Kameen went away with hope in his heart

CHAPTER XII

ON A CONVICT SHIP

“Lovely as light
Manx gells, the beautifullest things
That lives, I tell ye ; women with wings
That ’ill lift them over the muck and mire
And lift you too.”

T. E. Brown.

“We remember the pangs that wrung us
When we went down into the pit.”

A. Lindsay Gordon.

§ i

MOLLIE’S letter applying for the post in Liverpool ran :—

“Dear Madam,

I am wishful to obtain a post in a school. I belong to a respectable family. I can assist with French, English Grammar and Geography. I learnt French from a French lady. My age is twenty-three. I can refer you to the Vicar, Malew Church, and Madame de Croix, Ballasalla, Isle of Man.

I am, Madam,

Yours to command,

Mary Araballa Christane.”

Mollie scanned this letter anxiously, copied it out, posted it, and waited for a reply. But a couple of weeks passed by and she heard nothing. Daily she scanned the letters in

ON A CONVICT SHIP

the window of the little shop post-office, displayed for all to see. At last she gave up hope, and drafted an advertisement which she meant to send to a Liverpool paper, asking for work as a teacher. One day she was buying pepper and washing-soda in the little general shop, when she met Madame de Croix buying lemons for a lemon pudding.

"I hope you have good news from Liverpool, my dear," she said.

"No news at all," said Mollie sadly.

"That is droll. Mrs. Mardon has written to me about your French. I thought she had the intention of bestowing the situation upon you."

Mollie's heart thumped, and the colour flooded her pale face.

"Do not agitate yourself, my child. Ah! youth is impatient! Mrs. Mardon is not perhaps a lady, but a worthy woman, I am sure."

At that moment the little postmistress entered.

"Deed now, Miss Mollie, there's a letter come for thee; an' Ben was goin' to put it in the winder, so he was."

Mollie's face crimsoned with joy. The postmistress laughed. "From thy sweetheart, it is sure. Aw! what a thing it is to be young."

Mollie fetched the letter, and in the top barn among the hay she read it again and again.

"Great George Street,
Liverpool.

Dear Madam,

Having been informed by Madame de Croix that you are respectable and your French accent is promising, I desire to offer you the post

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

as teacher in my Seminary for young ladies. A bedroom will be provided, and you will take your meals with the young ladies. The salary I offer is £14 yearly. You will be charged 3s. 6d. monthly for washing your linen. Kindly communicate with me at an early date. I wish you to enter on your duties on November 20th.

I have the honour to be,

Yours faithfully,

Amelia Mardon."

Mollie wept for joy and thanked God for her good fortune. She felt nearer to Stephen already. £14 a year. She could save £10 every year. When she had £50 she could go out to Australia and perhaps marry Stephen.

Over supper she broke the news to her mother and Betty. "Black ingratitude," gasped her mother, "to want to leave thy mother in her old age. True enough are the words of the old book: 'Sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child.'"

"Nay, mother," said Mollie, "you're not needing me at all. Betty can make the butter an' fix your caps; an' we've hardly any cattle; an' 'tis good faithful servants you've got."

"Ay! faithfuller than me own child."

"Fourteen pounds is a lot of money," reflected Betty, "just for teachin', an' sittin' down all the time. There's no work in that; an' takin' your meals with the young ladies too."

"Takin' service in Liverpool like common bodies," moaned her mother. "There's none of the females of thy family so demeaned themselves. There's always a good home

ON A CONVICT SHIP

for thee, with plenty to eat, an' good clothes to thy back, an' a bit for thee when I'm gone. Why art thee wantin' money?"

"I want to save some, mother."

"Save is it? Well, if it's money you're wantin', there's Jude Kameen would give it thee, ay! an' a carriage too, an' you do be ever floutin' the man. Look at the good lacquer cabinet he's given me, because it was once me grandmother's."

"I've polished the brass on it, an' fine it looks," said Betty.

"I wouldn't be takin' the man's cabinet at all," affirmed Mollie.

"Let her be, mother," said Betty, "she'll soon tire of bein' across.* It's dirty in Liverpool they're sayin', an' no good food to be got. Mollie 'ill come back to the little islan' soon enough."

"There's bad folk in Liverpool," moaned Mrs. Christane. "It's no fit place for a respectable girl. Thieves an' robbers, an' harlots an' the like paradin' the streets; playhouses an' gamblin' somethin' shockin'. Didn't Stephen Fannin take to thieving the moment he set foot in Liverpool?"

"He did not, mother; but a bad man told lies on him."

"An' likely bad folk 'ill tell lies about thee, an' thou'lt be transported too; or hanged maybe. Oh, Mollie! Mollie!"

And Mrs. Christane wept aloud.

Kitty Quilliam, too, was sorely distressed, for Mollie was her favourite sister. "It's kind she is with the children," she said to Michael, "an' polite an' nice to Grandmamma. A genteel body is Mollie with a rise in her like. It's a lady she should be; an' now to go an' take service in Liverpool."

* Across the water, in England.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"It isn't service," explained Michael. "Teaching is genteel work. Mother did teaching, and she is a lady."

"Mollie's never been the same since Stephen Fannin was transported. It made her queer in the head like. She goes to the little chapel on the Fort Island to say her prayers now, an' no roof on it, an' only gulls an' the like to hear her prayers. If she would turn to Jude Kameen. He's a kind man an' gave Mother that nice cabinet."

"I'm not trustin' Kameen the length of me foot, Kitty."

"Mother says he's a good man."

"Much thy mother knows of men, Kitty."

"Mother's a wonderful woman, Michael, wise-like an' clever in some things."

"She's a clever tongue, an' there's no keeping it still at times."

§ ii

At her earliest opportunity Mollie went to see Ann Fannin. "The farm is Stephen's," said Ann, "with shares for me and Isabella. An' I'll be workin' it for him, an' savin' all I can, Mollie."

"How much would another trial cost, Ann?"

"A lot of money, I'm thinkin'; an' then without more evidence they won't have another trial."

"We'll get more evidence," said Mollie. "I'm goin' to Liverpool, Ann, to earn money. We'll be savin' all we can till the time comes, an' it *will* come, Ann, an' Stephen *will* be free yet."

Ann's eyes shone. "You are faithful to Stephen," she said.

ON A CONVICT SHIP

"I'll beg my way to Australia, goin' barefoot all the time, an' pick seaweed an' sticks on the shore all my days to make fires for Stephen," declared Mollie.

"Stephen will not be wantin' that at all; but it is my belief that Kameen stole the horse, and blamed Stephen because he wanted him out of the way."

"I'm sure of it, and I told him so."

"Mollie! what did he say?"

"He slunk off like a whipped dog."

"He'd give anything to get you, Mollie."

"He never will, Ann, never. I'd marry Stephen straight out of prison, an' I'd marry him in prison if they'd let me."

"Stephen is lucky to have thee, Mollie."

"And I am lucky to have Stephen, Ann. I pray for him every day, and every week I go to the little chapel on the Fort Island and pray. It is peaceful there, and God hears better when there's not a lot of people, with only one in the chapel praying for Stephen. I know God hears. Sometimes I feel warm inside, as though He spoke to me."

"Yes, Mollie, I feel like that sometimes at Hango Hill; I run to Castletown to buy what we want for the house; and then I go on to Hango Hill. And sometimes I feel God is there, and that He knows about Stephen."

"He does know, and He will deal with Jude Kameen in His own good time."

"Yes, but poor Stephen in that dreadful ship with two hundred and fifty-six men, dreadful thieves and murderers, and Stephen such a kind, clean-livin' man. It's very hard."

"It is, Ann, but God will take care of him. I know it. Sometimes at the Fort Island God speaks to me like, and tells me so. So it's Jude Kameen we'll be pitying in the time to come. It says in the Bible, 'The wicked are like

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt'."

"Yes, Mollie, I was thinkin' of Stephen all last Sunday, and in the evenin' Passon Quine preached from the text: 'Devise not a lie against thy brother; neither do the like to thy friend.' I'm sure he had Stephen in his mind."

"He never thought ill of Stephen at all. Twelve years isn't so long, Ann; and Stephen will be let off long before that; there's lots of conditional pardons and tickets-of-leave; and Stephen won't feel so bad when he's married."

Ann looked at the beautiful young woman before her, with her saint-like serenity and passion for self-sacrifice. "You are good to Stephen," was all she said, though there was wonder in her soul at Mollie's selflessness.

"An' Stephen will be good to me, Ann, in the years to come. Life is hard for us all, but it is good to have one's sorrows in youth, when we are strong and can bear them."

"Perhaps it is," said Ann doubtfully, "an' when are you goin' to Liverpool; an' what'll you be doin' there?"

"I'm goin' to a Seminary for young ladies, Ann. Seminary is a fine Liverpool name for a girls' school; and I have to begin work on November 20th. I'll find out a lot about Australia and convicts in Liverpool. It's a better place to get to know things than in Ballasalla."

"Oh, Mollie, I shall miss you so. There's Isabella and mother and Stephen all gone, and now you. It's lonely and queer I feel, by myself at Ballakilleen."

"You must try to be brave, Ann. The place must be kept together for Stephen's sake."

"Yes, I know. Katty Coole is a help, an' old Ambrose Quiggan too. He believes in Stephen, an' will keep the

ON A CONVICT SHIP

farm together for him. I have the mortgage to pay and I must work hard myself."

"You'll never forget to pray for Stephen."

"Never ; I'll find time to get to Hango Hill often. There was a church there once, and the spirit of that good man *Illiam Dhone* is there. Granny had a handkerchief that had been dipped in his blood, and it always brought good luck ; and cured her rheumatics."

"Where is the handkerchief now ?" asked Mollie quickly.

"Among mother's things somewhere ; I've never had the heart to look over them yet."

"Find it, Ann, and wear it, when you go to pray at Hango Hill."

"I will, Mollie. Granny had a little silk bag she wore round her neck, with the handkerchief in it ; and it was wonderful the cures it did, and the luck it brought."

"Wear it, Ann ; wear it an' think of Stephen."

"I will, Mollie."

"If, a chance time, you can get to the Fort Island Chapel, go and pray there too, Ann. Not but what Hango Hill isn't a good place, where the spirit of *Illiam Dhone* walks on January 1st ; I shall be far away in a big town with no ruins of holy places by the sea. It's pitying the folks in big towns I am, where there is no ruined churchyards an' chapels, to be alone with God an' the sea, an' gulls, an' scent of gorse, an' old graves to teach us about God. I shall miss the little ruined chapel terrible bad, Ann."

Mollie had hit on a great truth ; for if there were no death, and evidences of death, people would know little about God ; and simple folks would have to struggle on, without those tragic moments which bring them close to great mysteries.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

§ iii

Stephen lived in a kind of bewildered trance, after his sentence. It was an impossible, unthinkable thing that had befallen him. Kameen was a scoundrel, a thief, a murderer. He, an innocent man, had been convicted to be hanged on Kameen's word that he had stolen the horse. He saw it all now. Kameen wanted him out of the way to marry Mollie himself; and his thoughts grew dark, bloodthirsty and terrible. To be alone with Jude Kameen for five minutes; how he longed for it! He would twist his neck as he twisted the neck of a chicken for the pot. The man was too bad to live; and Stephen looked at his powerful hands and groaned in the agony of a wronged and impotent man. Then suddenly he thought of Mollie, and he said aloud, "And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled." He heard the words and wondered. Then he found he was saying them himself. He had heard them in Malew Church, where he sat with his mother and Ann, looking down the aisle at Mollie's charming face beside her mother, in the dark pew; and the church door beyond was open. He could see the corn waving and poppies blazing, and the blue sea. And he was never to see them again, never to see anything; but to be hanged until he was dead, for Jude to marry Mollie. The happiness of centuries would never atone for that agonized time in the condemned cell. Then came the softened sentence; transportation for twelve years. They had at least granted his life. He would come back and murder Jude Kameen. Then Mollie came, blessed Mollie! She was true to him. She would be true. She would come out to him and marry him. She bade him

ON A CONVICT SHIP

be of good cheer. There was a happy future for them, she told him. Well, he would believe it ; and doggedly endure all the indignities thrust upon him. "I shall be with you always, Stephen," Mollie had said, "and I shall always pray for you." Strangely uplifted was Stephen when he thought of Mollie. In the terrible days which followed, she was with him often ; he could almost touch her. He felt the breath of the sea, he smelled the gorse, he heard the gulls and the waves ; and he knew Mollie was beside him. "She is praying for me," Stephen thought, "and God lets me know." In after years, he could recall every incident on that convict ship. The misery of the wet decks ; the stifling heat ; the heavy smell of herded human beings ; the coarse food ; the horrible oaths of the debased men around him ; the sense of having no personal identity, being merely a unit in a foul mass of evil humanity.

And yet, Stephen was fortunate in being sent out in a ship in charge of a certain Dr. Colin, a surgeon of the Royal Navy, whose business it was to look after the well-being of the prisoners. Dr. Colin was an enthusiastic reformer, and a Christian gentleman. In a pamphlet on prison reform written by him at this time he says : "We hear much of *separate*, *solitary* and *silent* systems of prison discipline ; but unless the Christian system be brought to bear, with Divine power, on the understandings and consciences of criminals, every other system, which professedly contemplates their reformation, must prove a failure." He wished to keep the wretched convicts occupied and interested, to teach them, and try to arouse their better nature during the miserable and tedious voyage ; he was fond of quoting from Hosea, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." He was an efficient organizer, and he had every detail planned

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

beforehand. Before embarking Stephen recognized the admirable organization when his mattress, with his pillow tacked to the end of it, plainly marked with his number, were assigned to him. With these impedimenta, he marched with the others in an orderly fashion on board, and received his bedding and blanket, and was made acquainted with his sordid berth. Even before the prisoners were on board the *messes* were formed and some of the petty officers appointed. On the first day, at the earliest possible moment, Stephen found himself with the other prisoners, standing on the quarter deck, with the guard drawn up on the poop, and Dr. Colin addressed them. It was an earnest, even impassioned address, an attempt to get at the humanity in each of these sin-stained men; and it contained a message of hope. Stephen was greatly impressed with Dr. Colin's personality; and he felt under the stimulus of this first address, that even as a prisoner on a convict ship he had duties to perform towards himself and his fellow prisoners. For the most part his fellows were the scourgings of humanity, hoary sinners with leering eyes, forgers, swindlers, murderers, smugglers, pickpockets, burglars, steeped in every variety of crime; and among them were young boys, hardly out of their childhood, pathetic in their childlike ignorance. The great bulk of the prisoners were brutish, blasphemous men, from whom Stephen shrank; but there were some to whom their situation was an overwhelming tragedy, and to these Stephen felt a kind of kinship.

The second day, Dr. Colin tried to grade the prisoners, according to their ability to read and write, into small groups, or schools. Out of the whole number, two hundred and sixty-five, only forty-six could read and write; and they

ON A CONVICT SHIP

were placed in the highest group. From these, schoolmasters were chosen, whose business it was to try and teach the small groups of nine or ten men assigned to them to read and write. The schoolmasters had to take charge of school books, and to ensure the regular attendance of their pupils. It was Dr. Colin's ambition to see that every prisoner learnt to read during the passage ; and to present him with a Bible with a few personal words of encouragement at the end of the voyage. Stephen was chosen at once for a schoolmaster, and many a time he was glad of the task. Again, Dr. Colin separated all boys under sixteen from the rest of the men ; and Stephen was in charge of a class of boys from twelve and upwards. The appointment of such petty officers as Captains of Decks, Captains of Divisions, Captains of Forecastsles, Captains of Boys' Wards, Cooks, Barbers, Heads of Mess, Deck Washers, etc., occupied some time, but all was settled before the end of the second day ; and on the third day the regular routine began. Perhaps a day in the life of a prisoner on board a convict ship, which has come down to us in extracts from a rough diary kept by Stephen at that time, may be illuminating.

At 5 o'clock in the morning the Captains and Deckwashers and Cooks were called for their duties of scrubbing, cleaning and cooking.

At 7.30, when the decks were supposed to be dry, all the bedding was put into a net hammock and brought to the deck to be aired.

At 8 o'clock breakfast was served, usually a coarse mess of porridge and salt, served on a wooden platter with a piece of ship's biscuit, and a drink of water.

At 8.30 prayers were read. At 9 o'clock inspection. At 10, when all had been cleaned and inspected, schools began.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Often indeed a sorry travesty, amid din, cramped quarters, sometimes great heat or wet decks, dreary, unresponsive, blasphemous pupils, with hatred and murder in their souls. At 12 o'clock dinner was served. Broth, sometimes dumplings, or potatoes, or biscuit, occasionally a piece of coarse meat.

At 1 o'clock came the treat of the day, when an antiscorbutic drink was served, consisting of wine, water, lime-juice, and sugar. This was to prevent an outbreak of scurvy. It was greatly appreciated; and an effective punishment was the withholding of this coveted drink.

At 2 o'clock schools again assembled until 3.30. Then a popular lecture was given by officers on geography, or some simple subject connected with natural philosophy. Then came supper, and bedding was returned to the berths. Afterwards came prayers and the reading of Scripture.

Every Wednesday men had clean shirts, and on Saturdays they were required in divisions to wash their clothes. Dr. Colin had sound views on cleanliness, and all the exterior parts of the sleeping berths were well scrubbed with soap and water; but Stephen, in his diary, sometimes complains of vermin. Dr. Colin tried to increase the ventilation for the prisoners by means of windsails to force more air down the hatchways. He was well aware of the importance of dry decks, and contrived swinging stoves lighted with charcoal to dry them, in spite of which the men sometimes suffered from rheumatism. The wards and hospital, which in truth were in a sorry corner partitioned off, were often sprinkled with chloride of lime and vinegar to purify them. But where there is closely-packed humanity in limited space, there is bound to be sickening heavy smells, and Stephen's life was often a misery. That Dr. Colin succeeded in im-

ON A CONVICT SHIP

proving the condition of the transported prisoners, there is no doubt. It is reported of him that during one of his voyages, one hundred and seventy men out of two hundred and twenty became professed Christians, and many of them in after life were self-respecting members of society in those early Australian days.

During Stephen's voyage, not only were no lashes inflicted, nor irons used, but not one convict was placed under a sentry. But Dr. Colin was a remarkable man, and every system is at the mercy of the people in authority. His presence was an immense comfort to Stephen, who really benefited from his special addresses to Schoolmasters and Petty Officers. The most vivid experience during the voyage was a terrible thunderstorm. It was sultry weather, the thermometer ranging from 83 to 86 degrees. Stephen was awakened by the crashing of thunder. The heat was suffocating; and the closely packed men in bunks lining the sides of the ship were terrified. Flashes of lightning were continuous and vivid, with scarcely a moment's intermission; rain fell in torrents. The storm continued for hours. The prisoners went to their deck and huddled about cowed and miserable; while some of them moaned that the end of the world was upon them, and prayed aloud of their sins. Hours dragged on, and the fury of the raging storm remained unspent. Suddenly a thunderbolt struck the fore-royal-mast of the ship, and broke it in pieces; the great ship shuddered as the thunderbolt crashed into it. It seemed to pass all around the deck; so it was afterwards affirmed by scores of eye-witnesses. Everybody waited agonized and breathless for indications that the ship was sinking. Even hardened criminals sank on their knees praying aloud. But strange to say, no fatal damage was done, and very gradually

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the storm died away. Stephen, throughout the whole of the time, was calm, with a sweet sense of security. Whether it was a vision, or a dream, he never knew, but the whole time he was conscious of Mollie kneeling beside him. Mollie in the plain gown, and cottage bonnet with her beautiful face, and the wind blowing upon her cloud of hair. She was praying for him, and he felt safe and comforted.

CHAPTER XIII

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

“ Ah ! yet, when all is thought and said
The heart still overrules the head.”

Clough.

“ A kind old woman at heart, yet her tongue nagged
overmuch.”—*Miss Milford.*

§ i

MRS. CHRISTANE was alone in her bedroom examining her treasures. Her wedding gown, a silk Paisley shawl, and a lace collar which she wore at weddings and christenings. She took them one by one, out of the bottom drawer of her Spanish mahogany chest-of-drawers, unfolded the fine paper in which they were wrapped, and looked at them with adoring eyes. The wedding gown was a delightful colour, just like the bloom on a ripe fig unplucked from the tree, and shining in the sun. It was the very best quality of Chinese silk, smuggled silk doubtless, of long ago. For years, it lay untouched by the scissors in its pristine folds ; and then her mother had given it to her for a wedding gown. “ There’s not the like in these days at all,” Mrs. Christane said to herself, as she touched it tenderly and held it against her withered face, “ an’ the handsome I looked in it too,” and her old face curved into smiles as she recalled the compliments of her husband, and her friends and relations. Even the parson had said there was not a “ more beautiful bride in the kingdom.” Mollie was like her, but Mollie was even handsomer. She was more religious, too, and looked sometimes like the picture of an angel ; and Mollie was going to

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

leave her, going away to Liverpool with all its dirt and bad people. Mollie her youngest born. Yet, she was going into a school for young ladies ; and the people in Liverpool were rich, and terrible fine, she had heard. Mollie somehow looked like a lady, more than Betty, or Kitty, even in her grand new silk gown. And Mollie would meet ladies. She considered Mollie's wardrobe. Her good Manx-spun wool gowns, and cotton gowns, were well enough for the Isle of Man ; but in England she would need something finer. She stroked the silk tenderly ; she had been saving it for Mollie's wedding. She had begun to believe that Mollie would never marry Jude Kameen. The pity of it, and he so rich. Stephen was out of the way. Perhaps Mollie would never be married at all. Well, she should have the silk gown ; and go to England as fine as any of them. How angry Betty would be. She must give Betty the silk Paisley shawl to placate her. After all Betty was the elder. It was hard to part with her treasures in her lifetime, but Mollie must not go away among ladies looking like a poor Manx farmer's daughter. Her mind was made up. She made a neat parcel of the silk gown and hid it under her bed. During dinner she told her daughters that she was going to drive to Douglas with Mr. Caine.

"I'll get ready, mother," said Betty.

"I'm not wantin' thee to-day. It's business I've got."

Betty was not hurt. She looked at life from the robust pagan point of view, enjoying every moment ; so she went on eating her potatoes and herrings with a relish, and added thick cream to her apple pudding. Mollie lived the invisible silent life, that is hidden in the soul. She seldom made comments, but now she said in some surprise : "If you would like to have me, mother, I'm ready."

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

"I require to be alone," was her mother's reply.

Mr. Caine called, and Mrs. Christane and her parcel drove away.

Mysteriously she unwrapped her parcel and displayed the gown to Miss Fitzsimmons. "It's elegant, ma'am, that's what it is. You never see the like in these days at all. See the beautiful bloom of it, an' the rich it is. Even the queen on her throne couldn't get a better silk if she tried."

"It was my wedding gown," asserted Mrs. Christane with pride.

"Ay! they knew what silk was in them days. You want it made more fashionable perhaps for a wedding?"

"I do not require it for myself, but my youngest daughter is goin' to Liverpool, and I wish her to be dressed like the Liverpool ladies."

"Deed, Miss Mollie 'ill look well in it, so she will. It takes a handsome lady to set off a silk like this, Mrs. Quilliam. The skirts is not worn so wide now, as in them days. I can take a breadth out an' make a fichu-fold; and spare a bit for a bonnet. Aw! the elegant silk it is."

Mrs. Christane made a thrifty bargain 'concerning the price of these additions to Mollie's wardrobe, and rejoined Mr. Caine and drove home.

"Betty," she said, over supper, "I'm thinkin' of givin' thee my silk Paisley shawl."

Betty was "struck all of a heap," as she said afterwards to her friends Maria and Fanny Brideson. "Don't you want it, mother?"

"I shall not wear it again," she said, "an' its handsomer than the one Kitty's got."

"It is so," agreed Betty.

"Mollie, go thou to-morrow to Miss Fitzsimmons and let

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

her fit thee for a gown. I'm having my weddin' gown made up for thee."

"It is much too good for me, mother."

"It's nonsense thou'rt talkin', girl. If thou must go to Liverpool, thou shalt go dressed like a lady."

So the matter was settled, and Mollie in her new finery was indeed a beautiful picture, such as rarely gladdened the eyes of the Liverpool gentlemen, accustomed as they were to elegant ladies.

§ ii

Old Mrs. Quilliam was pleased to hear of Mollie's success, and she ceremoniously invited her to tea. She told Kitty she wished to give her advice about teaching. Mollie accepted the invitation with alacrity. She wanted an opinion concerning her fitness for the post in Liverpool. She seized the opportunity of paying her last visit to the little ruined church on the Fort Island. She remained a long time kneeling among the nettles at the east window; and some children who were gathering flitters (limpets) from the rocks, strayed by. They were frightened when they saw Mollie kneeling there, and ran away swiftly, thinking she was a spirit; but the elder girl shrewdly said "Spirits aren't dressed that way at all," and they lingered along the road to the island until she passed them. "There, it's Miss Mollie Christane saying her prayers in the ould chapel, so quare like she looked."

Mrs. Quilliam welcomed Mollie warmly, and after tea she gave her advice about her calling.

"You must read a great deal," she said, "and above all you must read about Ancient Greece."

Mollie sighed. "I have no books."

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

"You can join a library in a place like Liverpool. You had better read *Rollin's Ancient Greece*."

Mollie promised to do so.

Mrs. Quilliam produced a little, grey-mottled book in her own neat handwriting. "Under the direction of my dear father," she said, "I prepared this little book of extracts, which are carefully chosen to form the female mind, and to direct the thoughts to a future life. I found it of great assistance to me in my career as a governess; and I am going to lend it to you."

Mollie thanked her gratefully and took the book. "I will be very careful of it," she said.

"Copy it, my dear, in your spare time, and add to your own copy; when you read books of worth, mark the impressive passages, and transcribe them at your leisure."

"I will, indeed I will; you are most kind to me, ma'am." Mollie glanced at the book. "There are many things here I have never heard of," she said despondingly.

"Doubtless, Miss Mollie, but a teacher must know a little about a variety of things. Examine the index of the book; you will see the contents fall under three headings—Theology, Ancient History, and Polite Literature."

Mollie examined the index. Under Theology she read:—

"On the existence of a supreme Being."

"Ray on the wisdom of God."

"You can read the old English Divines, Miss Mollie, and copy choice passages. In conversing with your pupils you must quote passages to them of theological interest."

Mollie promised to do so.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Now read to me the extracts under Ancient History."

Mollie read. "Geographical description of Ancient Greece, Illustrious Grecians, Alexander the Great. Successors of Alexander. Character of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general. Extracts from Cicero's letters."

"You will get the pith of the ancient world in these extracts, Miss Mollie, so my dear father used to say. I learned them diligently; and was able to converse with bishops, statesmen, and other gentlemen of culture. I also could listen to their conversation intelligently."

Mollie gazed humbly at the small, clear handwriting, and promised to read and learn the extracts.

"As to Polite Literature," went on Mrs. Quilliam, "you will find extracts from divers sources. From Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Verses spoken by Mrs. Siddons. Johnson's *Tragedy of Irene*. Extracts from the letters of Lady Mary W. Montague. From *The Search after Happiness*, by Hannah More. Poems from Cowper. Passages from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, and from Johnson's *Letters to Mrs. Thrale*, also a few discreet passages from Lord Byron's poems."

Mollie turned over the pages of the book. "I will indeed try to remember all you say," she said, "and I will learn all the passages in the book."

"If you do this, my child, your mind will have a foundation upon which you can build up yourself."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"Nothing is so elevating to the female mind," went on the old lady, "after the Holy Scriptures, as a study of polite literature and ancient history."

Mollie acquiesced.

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

"Every day, after reading your portion of the Bible, read a portion of some sound good book."

"I will," agreed Mollie.

"There are some arithmetical puzzles at the end, and ingenious problems. On wet days when your pupils are fractious, amuse them with these. It will sharpen their wits."

"Yes," agreed Mollie.

"You can return me the book when you have copied it out. I wish to give it to my granddaughter Bride when she grows up. She ought to be a clever woman."

"I am sure she will," said Mollie, turning over the leaves of the manuscript.

On the title page was written: "A Bishop's Epitaph in the Isle of Man.

"In this house which I have borrowed from my brethren the worms lie I, Samuel, by Divine permission late Bishop of this Island, in hopes of the resurrection to eternal life. Reader, stop—view the Lord Bishop's Palace—and smile."

Mollie read it. "Who was the Bishop?" she asked.

"Samuel Rutter, my dear. He governed the Manx Church wisely, during the Civil Wars, and then became Bishop. It always comforts me to think that our poor dust has the hope of a joyful resurrection."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"I wish you every success, my dear. If you succeed in England, I hope you will return to the Isle of Man and start a school in Castletown. It would be nice for Patience, Bride, and little Faith."

Mollie blushed at the ambitious idea and promised to think of it.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

§ iii

It was a trying passage for Mollie to Liverpool. The Royal Mail packet was a small boat, and the accommodation primitive. The stewardess, a widow from Colby, said cheerfully : " 'Deed now, Miss Christane, it's a dirty passage we'll have. You lie down before she starts ; lie prostrate flat on your back. Take off your shawl and bonnet. Now I'll fetch you a sup of brandy to settle your inside ; and you get off to sleep."

" I want to see Douglas Head," said Mollie.

" Don't be troubling about that. There's a rough bit of sea round the Head. Lie an' try to sleep, an' maybe you'll not be sick."

Mollie obeyed and slept for a couple of hours or so. She awoke to discomfort and confusion. The boat dancing on the great waves ; crockery smashing ; women lying groaning on the floor ; sailors trampling overhead ; water washing overboard and slopping down the stairs. The stewardess was chatting to a fat Manx lady lying on the sofa beneath her.

" The Lord bless me ! Mrs. Coſteen, ma'am, but it's a graspin' man the Bishop is, with his tithes on turnips," she was saying.

" Are we nearly there ? " Mollie asked.

" We're not then, Miss Christane, but it's a middlin' good passage for all. A fine wind, an' drivin' us along it is. We shall be in Liverpool before dark."

Mollie lay there in deadly discomfort, and the hours dragged on. She thought of Stephen in the convict ship, " packed like herrin's in a barrel," Ann had said, all among

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

those wicked men, thieves and murderers. And Stephen as handsome and good a lad as ever trod the heather of his native land. Why did God let such things be? The future seemed dreary enough. Suppose she was of no use to Mrs. Mardon in the school! Those things about Greece, and God, and Happiness in the little grey-mottled book were terribly hard. There were thousands of books in the world, and she ought to know them all. Suppose Mrs. Mardon turned out to be a cruel woman, or a drunkard, or a card-player? Brada Cragreen had told her of ladies who did dreadful things in England. Suppose there was no school at all, and the advertisement was merely a trap to entangle an innocent girl. Her mother had told her lurid stories of the kind. Mollie grew sick with apprehension. Ballasalla and her peaceful home seemed a long way off; and still the packet ploughed on in the stormy sea; and she was getting farther and farther away. She dozed fitfully, and awakened in a fright. "Only for Stephen," she said to herself, "I'd never have left my home."

"It's in the river we are now," the stewardess informed her, "an' a good passage, thank God. Get up and drink a little sup of tea, and go on deck an' get a sight of Liverpool."

She felt better after the tea, and she climbed upstairs and watched the great river with the houses, streets and villages on either side, and the big black Liverpool looming ahead.

"Sure it's lost I'll be entirely in that place," she said to herself. "How'll I be getting to Great George's Street with all the crowds of people about, and me not knowing the way."

She sought advice from her friend the stewardess.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Sure it's easy enough, Miss Christane. Teddy Qualtrough of Ballabeg 'ill put your box ashore, an' find a hackney coach for ye."

"It'll cost a lot of money," said Mollie.

"Not that much at all. You give Teddy sixpence, an' a fine bargain he'll make with the rascal that drives the hackney coach."

It was about six o'clock when a weary and timid Mollie arrived at the door of Mrs. Mardon's "Seminary for Young Ladies." The house was tall and straight like the fine houses in Athol Street, with narrow windows, and a certain dignity of aspect which was pleasing to look upon. A boy in a page's suit, much too large for him, opened the door. He glanced at her box, and bawled out; "Martha, here's Miss Christane, and I shall want help with the box." Martha, in neat shoes, a pert cap, and a sparkle in her eye, appeared.

"Don't shout, you rude boy; be genteel, do." She led Mollie into a hall furnished with cases of stuffed birds, and opened the door of the best parlour. "Miss Christane, ma'am," she announced, and ushering Mollie in, left her. It was a large room and it looked educational. The carpet had been made in cross-stitch by industrious fingers. There were golden eagles and russet-red oakleaves on it, with a soft grey background. There was an exquisite Sheraton piano, inlaid with satinwood and brass. It was perfectly proportioned, and Mollie knew that it was perfect, and loved it at once. There was a dingy harp, a great globe of the world, a case of books, a drawing board, a pair of compasses, an upright, narrow gilt mirror, with little gilt balls around the top moulding, a marble statue of a Greek lady, and some delightful Queen Anne chairs with cabriole legs, ball and claw feet, the seats covered with a dim yellow cloth. As

A LITTLE GREY MOTTLED BOOK

there was nobody in the room, Mollie sat down and waited. A soft voice at her elbow said coaxingly, "Have you come, dear? God save the King." Mollie started; was it a spirit? she wondered. She laughed when she found it was a grey and red parrot in a cage regarding her with a wise and aged eye. "Pretty Polly," she said.

"Is that Miss Christane? Come forward, please," called a voice from an inner room, the opening being concealed by a green repp curtain.

CHAPTER XIV

A RESPECTABLE SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

“Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone,
Kindness in another’s trouble,
Courage in your own.”

A. Lindsay Gordon.

“Many of our sex are capable of great efforts, of making great sacrifices—but few remain habitually gentle.”—*Miss Edgeworth.*

§ i

MOLLIE entered the inner room, where a large lady in a purple gown reclined upon a long Chippendale sofa, with two arms and eight exquisite legs. The lady was stout; her three chins reposed on her ample bust; and on her head she wore a green turban.

“I am indisposed, Miss Christane, as you see. A carbuncle of a distressing kind is forming on my cheek and causing me acute agony”; and the lady threw a yellow silk shawl around her afflicted head.

“I am sorry you are ill,” said Mollie gently.

“You are a pretty creature,” said the lady, looking favourably at Mollie. “Ah! beauty is fleeting. Be young and rejoice while you may. You have a soft voice with a pleasing accent, a little like Irish, but not Irish. ‘An excellent thing in woman,’ as the immortal bard says. Are you fond of Shakespeare?”

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

"Yes," said Mollie, "all that I have read," she added truthfully.

"Yours is a romantic land, my dear, with rocky gorges, waterfalls, and purple mountains. Mona's Isle. 'Ellan Vannin.' I used to know a Manx lady who sang—

" 'My own dear Ellan Vannin
With her green hills by the sea.'"

What is the exact meaning of *Ellan Vannin*?"

"Vannin means little. Really it means little island."

"How romantic you Manx people are to love your land so. You are true patriots. I saw your *Ellan Vannin* once, so charming, with mountains everywhere, and a smell of fish; a very healthy smell, I'm told. But the passage was a horror. Twelve hours, and I had a delicate stomach the whole time. Excuse my allusion to my inside."

Mollie smiled.

"Go now, Miss Christane, to Number 5. The inner closet is your own sanctum. Four young ladies share the outer room. You will be required to regulate their movements and chatter."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"Come back directly you have removed your bonnet and smoothed those dark tresses, and share my simple repast. Tea, poached eggs, dry toast and red currant jelly; positively the only food that can be eaten after a sea journey."

Martha was outside the door. "Me an' Timothy has taken your box up, Miss. I'll show you the way; there's hot water to wash in, Miss, in the brass jug."

Mollie followed Martha upstairs.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"I'm bringing in a bit of ham, Miss, for your tea, for you look hungry," said good-natured Martha.

As Mollie had eaten nothing since before dawn in the morning her looks did not belie her.

The room was small, the bed was small, the washstand was small; but there was a little window looking out on to a patch of green, with a laurel bush and a few melancholy lilacs. In a few moments Mollie appeared again in the parlour.

"You must drink a cup of tea before you speak one word," commanded Mrs. Mardon, pouring out the beverage. "These cups were my mother's—Liverpool china; so sweetly sentimental these little black pictures. I adore sentiment," and the lady sipped her tea.

"Cream is impossible in Liverpool, adulterated you know, with ingredients deleterious to health. I send to a little farm in Cheshire, and I always exact a promise that the maid shall be obliged to wash her hands before milking the cows—so necessary. I get my butter there, too; but it is a ruinous price; positively tenpence, and even a shilling a pound, and I know you get it for sixpence. You get eggs for nothing, I daresay; hens running wild, like blackberries and sparrows, and laying eggs everywhere in that romantic and blessed isle of yours."

Mollie laughed. "Eggs cost sixpence a dozen, ma'am, and sometimes fourpence."

"And fresh from the hen, I'm sure. In the Liverpool markets they make a practice of selling stale little Welsh eggs. Kept for weeks under people's beds in the Welsh cottages to get stale."

"Why?" asked horrified Mollie.

"To make people pay double price for what they call fresh eggs."

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

"How very wicked."

"Sweetly innocent you are, Miss Christane. I was like that when I was young. Youth is a sweet thing. Martha has brought some ham, I see. Have a thin crisped piece with a poached egg. Ham and eggs with a mushroom or two make a meal fit for a King."

Mollie proceeded to do credit to the viands provided.

"The young ladies have their evening meal at seven. Milk, wheaten cakes, and honey, with a little cheese for those with robust frames. The parlour boarders may have cold meat and small ale or a little wine if they wish. Miss Julia presides. Afterwards, I shall read prayers, and then we can talk business. I wish to put you through a little examination."

Mollie's face paled.

"To-night?" she asked.

"Yes; quite informal, I assure you. I merely wish to know your views on teaching polite literature and history to advanced pupils. Now go to your room, Miss Christane, and lie down for one hour. After a sea journey, the poor head is like a clock going round and round. Compose yourself, my dear, and in one hour we will have a little examination."

§ ii

Mollie went to her room sick with apprehension. She knew nothing of examinations. The Vicar's son had gone to a place called Oxford to pass an examination. He had failed, and come home again in disgrace. How could she hope to pass an examination? Oh! why had she come to Liverpool at all? Then she thought of Stephen on his way

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

to Australia ; of course she must be in Liverpool to learn more about convict life in Australia, to earn money to go out to Australia herself, and to look for proofs of his innocence in England. Then she thought of Mrs. Quilliam and her book of extracts. "Why! of course it was all in that book. 'Polite Literature,' Mrs. Mardon said, 'and history.'" That meant Scott, Shakespeare, Mrs. Hannah More, Johnson and Cowper. It might mean *The Children of the Abbey*, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as well. History meant Greece and Grecians. It was all in the book. Homer, Socrates, Plato, Alexander the Great. Mollie got out the book and scanned the neatly written pages, trying to fix the names in her memory, and the hour sped rapidly. She was deep in the exploits of Hannibal when Martha appeared.

"Mrs. Mardon's compliments, Miss, and will you please step into the parlour?" Mollie went with a beating heart, but a serene countenance.

"I have read prayers," Mrs. Mardon told her, "but I think this is my last appearance for some time. The carbuncle gains ground, and the agony is acute."

Mollie murmured her sympathy and sorrow.

"So kind of you, my dear. Have you had any experience of teaching?"

"No," said Mollie regretfully.

"So much the better. Are you acquainted with any theories of education?"

"None," said Mollie again.

"Delightful; and have you a system, or any ideas on organization?"

"No," replied Mollie, wondering what these things might be.

"Charming, indeed. Your predecessor, Miss Octavia

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

Featherstone-haugh, had experience and theories, and a system, also ideas on organization. She talked a great deal about these things, but she could not teach."

Mollie murmured. "Indeed."

"She talked about Thomas Day and other dull and didactic people, with theories of education. Theories, you know, came from France—the infidel Rousseau invented them."

Mollie did not know, and she remained silent.

"Miss Octavia Featherstone-haugh knew how everything should be taught, but she could teach nothing; so tiresome of her. Her name alone wasted the young ladies' time," grumbled Mrs. Mardon. "Such a long name. If every young lady uttered her name only ten times a day, about five school days were lost each year in merely saying her name. A shocking waste of precious time.

" 'How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour.'

What would dear Dr. Watts have said to this waste?"

"I don't know," confessed Mollie.

"There are three essentials which make for success in teaching the young," said the lady dogmatically. "The teacher must have no experience, no theories, and a short name."

"Christane has two syllables," lamented Mollie.

"A pretty name, a sweetly running name," approved Mrs. Mardon, "it trips lightly off the tongue. Not a clumsy mouthful like Featherstone-haugh."

Mollie was relieved.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Miss Christane, what would you consider suitable polite literature for young ladies from thirteen to seventeen?"

Mollie looked thoughtful.

"After Shakespeare, ma'am," she said, "I should teach Scott's *Marmion* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Some poems by Cowper; selections from Johnson and Milton; Mrs. Hannah More, and Lady W. Montague's letters."

"Very good, Miss Christane. Is not Johnson perhaps too difficult?"

"Johnson's *Tragedy of Irene* and his letters to Mrs. Thrale are not difficult."

"I think you are right; and what would you choose from Mrs. Hannah More?"

"The *Search after Happiness* is suitable, I think."

"You are certainly right. Would you allow novels?"

"Miss Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *Gaston de Blondville*, and *The Children of the Abbey*. These books improve the taste of young people, and teach a good deal of history without labour or fatigue."

"Perfectly true. What kind of history would you teach?"

"Ancient history, ma'am. Rollin's *Ancient History*, the lives of Homer, Socrates, Plato, also the life of Alexander the Great, and Hannibal the Carthaginian general. Then I would have them read Cicero's letters."

"Upon my word, you are ambitious. Your programme is wide. Is all this necessary?"

"You will get the pith of the ancient world if this plan of study be followed," said Mollie earnestly, "and the young ladies would be able to converse with bishops and statesmen, and listen to their conversation intelligently."

"You are a widely cultured young lady, Miss Christane. I had no idea that the ladies of your island were so deeply

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

learned. Ah! Miss Octavia Featherstone-haugh had not your culture and pleasing appearance. She had a large and distressing mole on her left temple which detracted from her value as a teacher."

Mollie blushed and remained silent under this praise.

"We have twelve boarders, two parlour boarders, and thirty-three day pupils—a large and genteel school. All the young ladies come from genteel families. Some from the merchant-shipping class, with very rich fathers. They are often greatly indulged, richly clad, and every whim gratified. Miss Octavia Featherstone-haugh offended the parents. She wanted these delicate girls to go about with holes in their shoes, or bare-footed; to have no regular meals and to sleep on hard beds too short for them."

"Why?" asked Mollie.

"To be ready to face the hardships of life."

"Dear me," said Mollie sedately, "the Manx fisher children are brought up like that."

"Are they healthy, and can they bear hardships?"

"Very healthy, and in times of famine, sickness, failure of crops, an' fish leaving the island, they have to bear hardships."

"Miss Octavia Featherstone-haugh said this was the right way to educate. She used to read it all out of a book written by a man named Locke. She called him a philosopher, but I thought he was a fool."

Mollie thought so, too, but she said nothing.

"Should you require a basin of water, a magnet, and a little tin duck with a steel needle coming out of its mouth in the schoolroom, Miss Christane?" asked Mrs. Mardon earnestly.

"I should not," replied Mollie; indeed she had never

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

heard of a magnet. "I should not know what to do with them."

"Miss Octavia Featherstone-haugh said these were necessary to gratify the young ladies' natural curiosity, and she took my best Spode washbasin for the tin duck to swim in, and broke it, and the water all over the floor—a shocking mess. That was the way the infidel Rousseau taught children."

"It seems very strange," said Mollie.

"You will promise me faithfully, Miss Christane, not to talk to the pupils about holes in their shoes; nor to have tin ducks and my best washing basins in the schoolrooms."

"I will, indeed," declared Mollie.

"Nor to read the works of the philosopher Locke nor the infidel Rousseau?"

"Not one word will I read," said Mollie firmly.

"That is settled, now you must be tired. Good-night, good-night. In the morning I will instruct you in your duties. My poor cheek throbs painfully; I shall have to hand the whole school over to you."

§ iii

Mollie was introduced next morning to the two parlour boarders, Miss Isabel Orange and Miss Rosalie Roundtree, and the twelve boarders. She had breakfast with them; and the young ladies admired Mollie extremely.

"Perfect beauty is very rare," said Miss Orange to Miss Roundtree, "and Miss Christane is perfect."

"Her hair, her eyes, and her saint-like look, they are charming," agreed Miss Roundtree.

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

"It is the delicate moulding of the bones of her face ; the poise of her head ; the perfect proportion of her figure ; these give her distinction," said Miss Orange, who aspired to be artistic ; and indeed, she painted portraits quite creditably. "We shall like her, Rosalie, even if she were an idiot and could teach us nothing, we should enjoy looking at her."

"Miss Featherstone-haugh had such big feet, and one hip higher than the other ; she was a fright," whispered Miss Roundtree.

"She had the face of a horse," agreed Miss Orange. "It was her high cheek-bones and her long upper lip. She was very boring."

"But Mrs. Mardon always said she was intellectual."

"My dear, she was stupid ; only stupid people are boring," declared Miss Orange.

Meanwhile Mrs. Mardon was initiating Mollie. "You will instruct Miss Orange and Miss Roundtree in ancient history and polite literature," she said. "Two lessons in each subject a week will be enough. They do French literature with Mademoiselle and quantities of needlework and embroidery. Miss Orange is seventeen. She will be married when Captain Boyden comes home, and she is making her trousseau. Miss Roundtree is the daughter of a sugar-planter in Jamaica. He is immensely wealthy ; but I think her mother is not white ; she is kept invisible. When her education is finished she will go to her father's relations. He wants her to marry an Englishman."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"I am going to give you the charge of the school at once, Miss Christane. My indisposition is sapping all my strength. I shall retire to my chamber until I am fit to be seen."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Mollie paled at the thought of so much responsibility, but she had plenty of courage ; and she felt confident of success if she were left alone.

" Miss Julia teaches the little ones in the small schoolroom ; and you will teach the elder girls in the large schoolroom. Miss Julia Knix is her name, but we call her Miss Julia."

" What must I teach ? "

" Reading, poetry, literature, history, chronology, and geography, also French grammar and exercises."

Mollie quailed. " I hope I shall be able to do it," she said.

" It is quite easy, my dear. The young ladies learn the lessons, you hear them repeat the lessons. It is all in the books. On Monday you will hear them say their collects, and on Friday the commandments and the church catechism."

" Yes," said Mollie.

" There is a master for arithmetic and penmanship. Miss Julia teaches fine needlework ; and my daughter Virgilia, Mrs. Box, teaches music, painting and drawing. Come, my dear, Miss Julia is ringing the bell. I will take you to your duties."

Mollie followed Mrs. Mardon to the large schoolroom, where some twenty-five young ladies were standing awaiting their schoolmistress.

" Good morning, ladies," she began. " I wish to introduce you to Miss Christane ; she will take my place entirely until my unfortunate indisposition is over," and the lady covered the carbuncle with the yellow silk shawl. " Miss Christane is a lady of learning, and I hope you will benefit under her tuition. Ladies, you may be seated."

The young ladies all sat down. Mrs. Mardon turned to Miss Orange. " You will be good enough, Miss Orange, to show Miss Christane where the books and needlework

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

are kept ; show her the time-table and routine, and assist her all you can, to-day."

Miss Orange bowed, and led Mollie to the high chair and desk near the window. "I will sit by you this morning, and show you everything, Miss Christane," said Miss Orange affably, as Mrs. Mardon sailed out of the room.

In her own room Mrs. Mardon comforted her afflicted cheek with a hot fomentation ; swathed her face in a bandage ; ate a poached egg on toast and drank a glass of wine. Then, feeling soothed and comfortable, she wrote to her daughter Virgilia :—

"My dear Virgilia,

Miss Christane has come. She is very handsome, with pretty manners, and an enchanting look of sadness in her sweet eyes. She is no simple country girl, but a true blue-socking. She says little, but when she talks, she talks like a book. She seems to have conversed with bishops and statesmen. I have handed the school over to her ; I am sure she is steady and competent. I shall take a rest. The doctor thinks the carbuncle is the result of worry. It was all the fault of that conceited, clumsy creature, Miss Featherstone-haugh, with her tin duck, breaking my best Spode wash-basin, and offending the richest parents. I got Miss Christane cheap, my love, only £14, and she pays her own washing. If she succeeds and remains here, I shall let her run the school herself ; and only see the parents, and make the bills. Miss Julia is a good creature ; she has been a blessing to me during this trying time. If she had intelligence, a memory, and good looks, she would make a good schoolmistress ; but the little ones like her, which is a blessing.

Your loving and afflicted mother,

Euphemia Mardon."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

§ iv

The morning passed smoothly enough with Mollie. Prompted by Miss Orange, she called the various groups of girls up in turn and heard them say their lessons. The books they used were all arranged in questions and answers. Mollie read the questions out of a book, and the girls repeated the answer they had learnt by heart. Then certain groups were drafted off to the master for penmanship and arithmetic ; others for French conversation and literature with the French mistress. Mollie found that she had to conduct a class in parsing. This somewhat frightened her. "It is quite easy," comforted Miss Orange. "I will fetch the book. You only dictate it."

"The book" proved to be an exquisitely written set of parsing exercises, which Virgilia, Mrs. Box, had produced at the school where she had been most expensively educated.

Very obligingly Miss Orange took the class herself to show Mollie how it was done.

"(Thou) be wise to-day. 'Tis (it is) madness to defer. Procrastination is the thief of Time," she read, and the pupils wrote the passage in their exercise books.

Miss Orange was most particular about the writing and spelling, and when the sentence was properly written, she drew a double line down the left-hand side of each exercise book and proceeded to dictate the parsing thus :—

"Thou (understood). Personal pronoun, second person, singular number, nominative case." And so on, until the end of the passage.

A map-drawing lesson followed. The young ladies had each drawn a fine bold map of Ireland, and outlined the

A SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES

counties in various colours. The printing of the names of some of the counties took up the whole lesson, and so the morning's work concluded.

In the afternoon all the young ladies were occupied with fine needlework of various kinds. Some embroidered on muslin; some tatted strong edging for undergarments; some worked samplers; and the older ones worked pictures in coloured silks, the canvas being stretched on frames. Mollie was expected to call up various groups in order for reading lessons. Groups of three read aloud to her from *Æsop's Fables* and the Gospels; and the more advanced pupils read Cowper's *Negro's Complaint*, portions of *Paradise Lost*, and selections from Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. Mollie received them with a beating heart. She corrected the young ladies' reading when she was aware of their mistakes, with gentle tones and a sweet seriousness which captivated them. She looked so demure and charming in her simple gown and fresh muslin fichu, her dark hair piled on her little head, and her blue eyes shining with the effort she was making to be adequate. She realized that her pressing need was books; she must get a little library together; and read and study in all her spare time, to be able to instruct faithfully. Miss Julia, a small person, almost a dwarf, with a wistful smile, and pale face deeply pitted with smallpox, sat at the other end of the room, instructing the smallest girls in the knitting of garters, the hemming of handkerchiefs, the rudiments of sampler-making. Occasionally, the elder girls sought her assistance in difficulties connected with their silken picture-making. So the afternoon passed away. When school was over and the boarders retired into the back garden with their skipping ropes, Miss Orange with Miss Roundtree took Mollie to show her the library. It was a

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

tiny room in the front of the house. To Mollie's joy some of the works of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Hannah More were there, also Sir Walter Scott's poems, Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, and the works of Shakespeare and Milton. There were also the works of Mrs. Trimmer brought up to date to the death of George III. The collection included :—

- Trimmer's Ancient History.
- „ Roman History.
- „ Scripture History.
- „ History of England in two volumes.
- „ Geographical Companion with coloured Maps.

Mollie was rejoiced when she saw them ; and she determined to master the Trimmer collection as soon as possible.

“ Only the parlour boarders and the Governess may use the library,” Miss Roundtree informed Mollie.

“ We may take one book at a time, and I am librarian,” said Miss Orange.

“ May I take a book now ? ” asked Mollie.

“ Certainly, Miss Christane, you may take a book every day,” replied the obliging Miss Orange ; and Mollie chose the first volume of the History of England, a little, brown leather-bound volume, with good print and curious little engravings.

“ I shall know a great deal if I stay here a year,” said Mollie to herself.

CHAPTER XV

COINCIDENCES

“Charity and personal force are the only investments worth anything.”—*Whitman*.

§ i

MOLLIE assumed the responsibility of the school and the house simply and seriously; her infinite tact made her rule light and pleasant. Earnest and unhurried in everything she undertook, and absolutely unselfish, she made many friends. Isabel Orange was devoted to her. Isabel was the orphan daughter of a Liverpool merchant; she had lost both her parents; and Mrs. Mardon's school had been her home since she was fifteen. Mrs. Mardon had been a cousin of her father's, and it was arranged that the girl was to live with her until Isabel's marriage to a young officer, Captain Boyden. She had her own way in the house and school; she was fond of Mrs. Mardon, whom she called Cousin Euphemia. Isabel was a very suggestible person. She took colour from everyone whom she admired; and it was just good luck when the colour was good. Unconsciously she imitated Mollie to an almost ridiculous extent, even to the demure quaintness of her attire, and the crooning voice with the soft Manx accent. Mollie had a large heart, and she mothered the lonely girl with sympathetic gentleness.

Mrs. Box, who spent two whole days each week in the school teaching music and painting, congratulated her mother on Mollie's excellence.

“After Miss Featherstone-haugh,” she said, “she is like

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

a serene moon, after a nasty stormy day," for Mrs. Box was inclined to be poetical.

"She takes everything off my shoulders—positively everything. The school is well-conducted; the young ladies like her; even that odious little Miss Georgina Trollop is quite tamed and obedient. She teaches conscientiously, and she positively prepares all the lessons. She knows all about the subjects in the question-and-answer books; and when it is not clearly explained in the answer, she knows enough to make it clear to the pupils."

"That," said Mrs. Box, "is very rare. I never yet met a teacher who troubled herself to find out anything further about the matter than the answer. I remember Miss Featherstone-haugh asked little Miss Trollop out of the General Knowledge book, 'What King once worked as a carpenter?' The answer was, 'Peter the Great.' The child was amused at the idea; she laughed and said, 'How funny for a King to work as a carpenter; tell me more about him.' Miss Featherstone-haugh said snappishly, 'There is no more, and little girls must learn not to ask questions.'"

"Ah, Miss Featherstone-haugh had no patience; and not much learning. Miss Christane reads all the books in the library, and she has asked for more books. Rollin's *Ancient History* and Miss Austen's works. Isabel reads far more than she used, and even Miss Roundtree is beginning to learn some history."

"Yes, Isabel dotes on Miss Christane; she influences her wisely."

"Miss Christane superintends the housekeeping, too; and Martha is not half so pert or extravagant as she used to be."

"Well, mamma, you can come and spend Christmas with

COINCIDENCES

me and leave Miss Christane to look after the house and Isabel."

"My love, it would not be proper; Miss Christane is too young and attractive to chaperone Isabel, when Captain Boyden arrives."

"La! mamma, Miss Julia will be here; and Miss Christane is very discreet with gentlemen. At the parents' soir   last night she was very modest and silent when the gentlemen wished to be introduced to her. Freddie said she was the finest girl in Liverpool; she looked quite distinguished in a lovely China silk gown, and no ornaments at all, just her white neck and beautiful hair."

"So different from Miss Featherstone-haugh, telling the gentlemen, rich shipping merchants, to let their daughters go about with holes in their shoes. She might have ruined the school."

"Indeed, she might. You will come at Christmas, mamma?"

"I must talk it over with Miss Christane and Isabel. Dear Dr. Mimms says I positively ought to have a change."

"Yes, mamma, Freddie told me to tell you to be sure to come. Our house is so healthy, purified by the sea breezes blowing up the river."

"You are a good child, Virgilia," said the lady, as Virgilia kissed her unafflicted cheek.

Only one letter had Mollie as yet written to Betty describing her new life. It ran:—

My dear Betty,

"Liverpool is very dirty, and there are lots of muddy puddles when it rains. There are crowds of people always; many very ragged

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

and dirty, but some very grandly dressed. I had to pass an examination which frightened me. It was about polite literature and ancient history. I passed very well, because old Mrs. Quilliam lent me a book, and written in it were bits of ancient history and literature, which the young ladies ought to learn. It was most useful, and I thanked God for it; and please thank Mrs. Quilliam for me. There are two parlour boarders, one is a young lady named Miss Isabel Orange. She is to be married to an officer in the army. I go out shopping with her sometimes. She is buying and making such pretty underclothes and cambric petticoats. These things are called a 'trousseau.' The shops are very big and full of beautiful things. There was an evening party for parents and the elder young ladies. Some of them played the piano and sang. I served the tea, and Miss Julia, the other governess, served the coffee. I wore my China silk gown at the evening party, which they call a 'soirée.' Miss Orange said my dress was very handsome. We have table napkins at dinner every day, and often we have wine to drink, with wine and water for the young ladies. On Sundays the puddings are cold and white, shaped like jellies. We eat jam with them. They are made with milk and something called isinglass. I have four hours off duty every Wednesday at five o'clock, and I go to Mrs. Boys to write letters for people. I earn 2s. 6d. each time. I am in charge of all the school, because Mrs. Mardon has a nasty sore on her cheek, which she calls a carbuncle. She thinks I do it very well."

Betty was mightily interested.

"Fine to be Mollie," she said, "with evenin' parties, an' drinkin' wine, an' table napkins, an' cold jelly puddin's."

"Mollie," said old Mrs. Christane proudly, "always minded her books, an' was diligent. She passed the examination, an' Passon Quine's son failed, so he did."

COINCIDENCES

"Fancy Mollie earning 2s. 6d. every week for just writing some letters. Money must be middlin' plentiful in Liverpool."

"Two shillings and sixpence is one-eighth of £1," said Mrs. Christane, "an' there are fifty-two weeks in a year. Eight into fifty-two makes six an' four over. That is four pounds or eighty shillin's. Eight into eighty makes ten. £6 10s. a year, Betty, for just writing a few letters every week, an' I can get a first-rate farm woman for £5 a year. An' Mollie to be earnin' all that money for doin' nothin' you may say, one evenin' a week."

"It's amazin'," said Betty.

"Ould Mrs. Quilliam never made that money, I'll be bound. Our Mollie 'ill be teachin' the Bishop's children yet, so she will. Aw! clever enough Mollie is at book-learnin', an' a fine lady she looks in the handsome silk gown, that me mother gave me to be married in."

§ ii

Mollie called on Mrs. Boys at an early date to offer her services every Wednesday evening in helping to teach "handwriting without lines," and pen-making. The lady kept a little stationer's shop in a small side street off Bold Street—an odd little shop going down two steps from the street into it. Mrs. Boys sold wafers, writing-paper, note-books, sealing wax, pencils, quill pens, ink, marbles, peg-tops, tobacco, snuff, and other useful and necessary articles. Her daughter, Polly, a child of ten, in a long blue pinafore, with the elbows out of her brown stuff gown, minded the shop, while Mrs. Boys taught the piano, handwriting, and

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

pen-making to all sorts and conditions of people, but chiefly the daughters of little tradesmen who aspired to play a tune or a hymn on the piano; working girls and domestic servants who wanted to write their own love letters; and errand boys who wanted to write and keep accounts. Every evening her classes were full. She was a hard-faced woman, who worked incessantly to keep up a respectable home, and bring up her children. Her husband was dead.

"How much time can you give?" she asked Mollie.

"From five to nine every Wednesday evening, ma'am."

"You could take over the letter writing on Wednesdays," she reflected. "My eldest daughter, Hannah, does it; but she wants to go out with her sweetheart once a week, so you may take her place."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"It takes five minutes to read an ordinary letter. The charge is 1½d. Customers pay in advance. For writing a letter that takes ten minutes, 3d. is charged, including paper and ink. You ought to earn 1s. 6d. every hour. You ought to earn 6s. in four hours, for there are always a little crowd of people waiting to come in. You will get 2s. 6d. each night."

"Thank you," said Mollie. "I would like to take the work," and so it was settled.

Every Wednesday evening Mollie sat in a small part of the shop, rendered semi-private by a big wooden screen, and received the clients, while Polly, in her long blue pinafore, sat in the shop and attended to the customers.

The clients were mostly girls whose sweethearts were at sea. "What do you want me to say?" asked Mollie patiently. "Just tell him I want him to come home and marry me." Mollie wrote as desired. "Finish it off

COINCIDENCES

proper," said the girl. "Don't you want to send him your love," asked Mollie. "If you like, but send him a line of kisses."

There was not much variation in those letters. The more painful ones were from young unmarried mothers imploring aid from the fathers to help to bring up the children.

One day a little old lady in a dingy bonnet, gloves and a long black veil came in with a boy about six years old. "I want you to write a letter about the boy to his father," said the old woman. Mollie took the mended quill and sheet of paper, and the old woman dictated:—

"Dear Sir,

I wish to inform you that John Henry is quite well. He goes to school and is learning to read. He is nearly seven, and his clothes cost more money now. He wants a big bouncing ball. All is well.

Yours respectfully,

Caroline Dawes."

"The address, please," asked Mollie.

"Jude Kameen, Esq., Advocate, Douglas, Isle of Man," said the old woman.

Mollie stiffened as she wrote; then she looked at the boy. "He is not your son," she said.

"No, miss, I'm his grandmother; my poor girl Fanny was his mother; she is dead now."

"And this gentleman is the lawyer, who sends you the money?"

"Yes, and he's the boy's father."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"He is a pretty boy," said Mollie gently.

"Yes, miss, my girl Fanny was a beauty. She was housemaid to old Mr. Nathaniel Quine, and Mr. Kameen was his nephew, and used to come and stay with the old man. Then Fanny, poor girl, ran away, and I never saw her again till she was dying, and she asked me to look after the boy."

"Where is Mr. Quine now?" asked Mollie.

"Dead, and everything left to Mr. Kameen; if the boy had his rights it would be his."

"Is he often in Liverpool?"

"Not often, but he has the house, a nice place that he is trying to sell. My sister Ellen is caretaker and housekeeper, but she is deaf, poor body."

"And where do you live?"

"I live with her, when Mr. Kameen is away, to help to take care of the house; but when he is at home I live in the little lodge at the gate. He pays me twelve shillings for the boy and myself; and I have to write to him every fortnight to say all is well. A hard man is Mr. Jude Kameen."

"Then you'll be coming to have more letters written?"

"I always come to Mrs. Boys. Mr. Kameen will not let me go anywhere else. He don't like the matter talked about."

"Of course not," said Mollie.

That night she lay awake for hours thinking. So Ellen, Caroline Dawes' sister, was the deaf old woman who gave evidence against Stephen. Could she find out anything further from Caroline Dawes, the boy's grandmother who lived at the lodge? She must try. Surely God had directed her to Liverpool and to Mrs. Boys. Ann said fresh evidence was wanted before she could help to establish Stephen's innocence. She might get that evidence. She must go warily and patiently.

COINCIDENCES

§ iii

The weeks which followed were full of work for Mollie. Her horizons widened, and her intelligence developed. Being very dissatisfied with the method of teaching parsing by dictating the exercises from those performed by Miss Virgilia Mardon in her schooldays, Mollie applied herself to a study of Mr. Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*. She found some difficulty in readily applying the rules to his mode of parsing; and as neither Mrs. Mardon nor Mrs. Box could help her, she wrote to Mr. Lindley Murray himself, who in his age and infirmity had retired to the city of York. The old man was pleased with Mollie's simple and earnest letter. He pointed out that she was using an early edition of his work, and presented her with his *English Grammar* in two volumes, comprising Grammar, Exercises and Key; he also begged her to accept a copy of his work, *The Power of Religion on the Mind*, and asked her to read a portion of the Holy Scriptures daily. Mollie was very grateful for his kind help. She also became acquainted with his *English Reader* and *English Spelling Book*, both of which she introduced to her pupils with successful results.

Mrs. Mardon went to visit her daughter early in December and Mollie managed the entire establishment. Miss Roundtree was to visit her father's relations for the holidays, and the twelve boarders returned to their homes. Most of them were sent for by their parents, and went home in the family chariot. Only two had coach journeys to make, and Miss Julia, who knew all about coaches, made the arrangements and saw the pupils off.

"It will be delightful, dear Miss Christane, to spend

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Christmas with you," said Isabel, when the last young lady had departed.

"We will read some nice books," suggested Mollie, "and take long walks together, though, to be sure, there are not very nice walks around here. If we could only have Langness, and the Fort Island and Santon near, how happy it would make us."

"It will be my very last Christmas in England for ages," went on Isabel, "and Captain Boyden will be here on December 24th. We shall be married in January, and we sail early in February."

"Surely you must be very happy, dear Isabel, to think of the arrival of your lover."

"I don't know. He is old, quite twenty-eight, I think, and I have not seen him since I was fifteen. My father arranged the marriage long ago; but I shall like a long sea-voyage and the fascination of a new country."

"Where will you live?" asked Mollie.

"In Australia, near Sydney, I think. There is a big convict settlement there, and Captain Boyden—Harry, I mean—he says I must learn to call him Harry—is to be stationed there."

Mollie's heart stood still for a second or so. "Why, Miss Christane, how white you look; you are tired. You do too much. Let me make you a cup of tea, or will you have a glass of wine?"

"Tea, please," said Mollie, and she allowed Isabel to bring her a footstool and a cup of tea.

"There, you look better," said Isabel, as Mollie's colour returned. "How I wish you were coming to Australia too."

"So do I, dear Isabel, so do I indeed, but we may meet

COINCIDENCES

there. I am going out to the convict settlement myself, as soon as I have money enough."

"You!" cried Isabel in astonishment. "You! what can you do in a convict settlement?"

"I am going there to marry a convict," said Mollie, her eyes full of tears.

"You poor, sad darling," and Isabel kissed Mollie's hair softly. "Now I know why you are so quiet and sorrowful. The convict is your lover."

"Yes," said Mollie.

"Confide in me, dear Miss Christane; tell me the whole story, and we will talk about it with Harry when he comes. We may get him pardoned."

"There is nothing to pardon," said Mollie proudly. "He is innocent, a very wicked man arranged it all. He wanted Stephen out of the way, for he thought I would then marry him."

"How exactly like a play in the theatre I once saw. It was called the 'Convict's Bride.' Oh, Miss Christane, tell me all about it, and I will never breathe a word to anyone except Captain Boyden—Harry, I mean. He will advise us, and we can get a pardon and then you will marry him and live near us. It is exactly like a play."

Mollie smiled wistfully. "It has been a very, very sad time for me. I was so happy and Stephen and I were going to be married, when this dreadful trouble came," and Mollie recounted the whole story to the girl, who was very loving and sympathetic.

"I am so glad now that I am to marry Harry. It will be beautiful to help you, my dear Miss Christane. Harry is really a nice man, father always said so. He is no relation to me, but he was a connection by marriage of my father's.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

I shall have a lot of money when I am of age, and father wanted somebody who would take care of me, and he arranged the marriage before he died. I shall be in Australia before I am eighteen. I feel very young to be a bride, but with you there, it will be a comfort."

"The ways of the Almighty are past fathoming," said Mollie.

§ iv

Kitty sent Mollie a goose for Christmas, and Michael added half a dozen bottles of French wine. He had a cargo of French wine just come into Derbyhaven in one of his own schooners, and he picked a very choice kind as a present for Mollie. Betty sent a couple of dozen fresh eggs and her mother added a pint of cream in a bottle, and a couple of pounds of fresh butter. These were packed in a large hamper, and given in charge of the captain of Michael's schooner, *The Diana*, which was sailing for Liverpool. Old Bill-a-Hal, or Captain Kewin, to give him his polite title, promised to deliver the hamper to Miss Mollie Christane herself. Mollie received him with shining eyes, when a few days later he presented himself with the offering.

"It's good to see you, Bill, so it is," said Mollie, shaking his hard hand; "an' how are they all in the island?"

"Middlin', just middlin'," said Bill-a-Hal, smiling a Manx smile at the pretty young woman in the demure gown.

"An' will you have a cup of tea, Bill?"

"I will if it plazes you, Miss Christane, but for meself I'd rather a sup of rum."

Mollie laughed. "For shame, Bill, for shame, an' this a school for young ladies; but maybe I'll manage a little drop

COINCIDENCES

of brandy to put in it," and Mollie bustled about to attend to the wants of the old sailor.

"An' how're ye likin' Liverpool?" he asked.

"Well enough, Bill, but it's not the lil' islan' at all."

"'Deed it's not then. Is it longin' ye are?"

"Ay, Bill, longin' enough," said Mollie.

It was a pleasant Christmas the three young women had at the school in Great George Street. Miss Julia was indulged and permitted to breakfast in bed every morning; and she had a glass of wine and a piece of cake before she went to bed. Miss Julia, the kind-hearted, hard-working, limited little soul, was very happy. The excitement was great on Christmas Eve when Captain Boyden was expected to call. Isabel wept with excitement and undefined fears, and she clung to Mollie. "I want my mamma," she said.

"Of course you do," soothed Mollie. "Let me help you to put on your very prettiest gown, and arrange your hair. You ought to look your best for the man you are to marry."

Isabel permitted herself to be soothed and insisted that Mollie too should be dressed in her silk gown. When Timothy announced Captain Boyden, the two ladies were seated in the inner drawing room with their needlework. Captain Boyden was tall and slim in a cut-away blue coat with a velvet collar, and a double row of buttons. His cravat was exquisitely folded; his pale nether garments were splendidly tight; his dark brown hair had a delightful wave in it; and his brown whiskers were everything that a lady could hope for in a hero of romance. He handed his tall hat with just the right kind of curl in the brim, and his smart cane to Timothy; and turned and bowed elegantly to the ladies, who rose and curtsied. "Have you come, dear? God save the King," said Polly in a clear tone, which caused

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

the three to burst into laughter. "So this is Isabel," he said, taking the shy girl by the hand; and then he took her in his arms and kissed her unblushingly.

"Captain Boyden, you shock Miss Christane," said Isabel, her face the colour of a red rose.

"I apologize, ma'am," and the audacious fellow turned to Mollie, who blushed too.

Martha brought in cake and wine, and an agreeable time followed; and Captain Boyden promised to spend Christmas Day with his little sweetheart and her handsome chaperone.

"He is very handsome, Isabel," said Mollie, when the gentleman had gone, "and not at all old."

"He has nice manners," approved Isabel; "he bows like a prince; and he is not at all fat."

"He is a fine brave gentleman," said Mollie, "and I am sure you will be very, very happy."

Isabel threw herself into her friend's arms and they both wept a little, for ladies were very sensitive in these days, and their emotions were not concealed and repressed as became the fashion later; and after all it is wholesomer to express what one feels and get rid of it, rather than bury it in our minds until it becomes an 'irritating splinter' darkening our days for ever, unless the psycho-analyst succeeds in digging it out, explaining it to the patient and so dissipating it.

Next morning Captain Boyden arrived in good time with his Christmas gifts. Pretty silken scarves for Miss Julia and Mollie, and a watch and chain for Isabel. Then he very gallantly escorted Mollie and Isabel to church, while Miss Julia remained at home to decorate the table and arrange the dessert. A very merry Christmas dinner they had. Goose, apple sauce, plum pudding, mince pies, and the

COINCIDENCES

finest fruit the Liverpool markets could produce, the last being a gift from Captain Boyden.

After dinner the lovers walked in the garden, and Mollie and Miss Julia watched them through the window. "The prettiest thing on God's earth," said Miss Julia sentimentally, "is a young girl and her lover."

"Yes," agreed Mollie, "but the tragedies of life, too, come to all lovers, their happiness does not last."

"But," urged Miss Julia, "they are young and handsome, and when troubles come there are always two of them. To be always alone, and poor, and ill-looking, is perhaps the greatest of all tragedies."

Perhaps she was right, poor little soul. There were no such things known as inferiority complexes in her day; but to be dwarfish and squat; to be pitted badly with the small-pox; to be a woman and fairly young, was a very hard lot, yet Miss Julia was not bitter. She did not envy Isabel and Mollie their good looks, she was only a little wistful sometimes; and looked forward to another life when she would be well-grown, with shining wings and countenance.

On Christmas night Miss Julia went to the curate's house to sing carols with his wife and daughters; and Isabel insisted that Mollie should tell the whole story of Stephen to Captain Boyden.

The young officer was greatly interested. "Can you get this Caroline Dawes to tell you anything about the morning the horse was taken?" he asked.

"No," said Mollie, "but I think she knows something; she always tries to turn away from the subject."

"Keep friends with her and keep your eye on her," he counselled, and he comforted Mollie greatly by telling her that he would look up Stephen when he reached New South

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Wales ; and try to engage him to manage a small farm for him. "The convict settlement is well managed," he told Mollie, "and the governor is a humane man. I daresay with good conduct, Mr. Fannin may get a conditional pardon before long ; but try to get definite evidence against this lawyer, Mr. Jude Kameen, and if the prisoner is proved innocent, he will come off with flying colours."

Mollie was greatly comforted, and went about her work with hope in her heart.

CHAPTER XVI

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

“Wildly on St. Matthew’s Eve
While the fleets were at sea
Came a storm . . .
 . . . in that moment
The waves of death covered them over.”

Manx Ballad.

§ i

MEANWHILE the problem of education became pressing in Derbyhaven. Old Mrs. Quilliam had a bad bronchial attack and for the winter months was unable to teach her grandchildren. The elder children, Dorcas, Rosaleen and Matthew, were sent to Ballasalla to the school of Mr. Thaddy Teare, where Dinah irregularly attended. Mr. Teare had been a soldier in his youth and Matthew adored him; and even applied himself to his sums to please him. Often Mr. Teare rewarded the boys by recounting the battles in which he had fought against Napoleon, and they looked upon him as a hero. Grandmamma was mollified when she learned that Latin was included in the school’s curriculum. Dorcas and Rosaleen learned Latin and arithmetic with docility; and they sometimes enjoyed the geography lessons, for Mr. Teare could be graphic and informing when he liked; but they hated the long walk across the fields every morning, and the heavy dinner basket they had to carry. Matthew never helped them. He ran on before, and spent his time at Johnny Juan’s forge, and refused to go to school in time. The little girls suffered agonies in inventing excuses for Matthew’s lateness for Mr. Teare’s benefit.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

The children always ate their dinner at Granny Christane's, and the old lady contrived daintier morsels for them than she found in the dinner basket. Her temper was softening of late. She missed Mollie, and was amazed at her success in Liverpool. She liked to have her grandchildren to herself, away from old Mrs. Quilliam's influence; and especially she delighted in Matthew. "He's a Kewley every inch of him," she would say to Betty. "Just look at the cock of his chin, an' the blue eye of him; the very spit he'll be of my father." Granny in her maiden day had been a Kewley, and she exalted her own kindred high above the Quilliams or Christanes. "Michael Quilliam is well enough for a man," she allowed, "it's his fine lady mother that troubles poor Kitty; but Michael 'ill never be the man my father was. Six feet four in his stockings was thy grandfather Kewley," she said to Betty, "an' Matthew is like him." Matthew began to listen, and Granny hastened to add, "If he's as good a man as thy grandfather, Betty, he'll do. He was never late for school, loitering at forges an' the like."

Matthew began to whistle, "We'll hunt the Wren," and sidled off to the garden.

"His granny at Ballasalla spoils the boy terrible," Kitty complained to Michael. "She'd give him the head off her shoulders, if he had any use for it."

Michael laughed. "The boy's young yet," he said tolerantly. "She's always teaching him the Manx, Michael; an' she gives him sixpence a week for sayin' his prayers an' the evenin' hymn in Manx."

"The Lord understands Manx well enough, Kitty."

"Maybe," grumbled Kitty, "but it isn't genteel at all now, only common persons talk Manx. I want Matthew

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

to be a parson, an' he must be genteel an' learn Latin for that, but Granny's incitin' him to be a farmer."

Michael laughed. "The little fellow will change his mind a score of times before he becomes either the one or the other," he said.

One January day it began to snow as early as ten o'clock in the morning; and at one o'clock the snow lay thick on the land, and the mountains were white. Snow is rare in the Isle of Man, even Matthew had only seen it once before; the children were wildly excited, and Matthew was boasting of the snow man he was going to make. Mr. Teare closed the school early; he told the children to get home quickly and remain indoors. "The roads will be shockin' in another hour or two," he said, and the snow continued to come down steadily.

"The children cannot get to Derbyhaven this evenin' at all," declared Granny. "Betty, see the warmin' pan is put into Mollie's bed for the two girls, an' Matthew shall have the lil' bed in Granny's room; an' stop Tom Cowle when he's passin', an' send a message to Derbyhaven that it's here safe the children are."

After dinner Granny set the three girls to make sheets. "Every sheet you make," she said, "you shall mark with your own name, and they shall go into Granny's big chest, an' she will keep them for you till you get married."

"An' if we don't marry?" asked Rosaleen.

"Hush, child, all right; little girls marry at the proper time."

Matthew insisted on going out to make a snow man; but the steady fall of snowflakes soon sent him indoors. "I've got nothin' to do," he complained.

"Come thy ways into the parlour, Matthew; but first

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

take off thy wet boots, an' thee shall make a nice map of the Isle of Man for Granny. Betty, give him a pencil and paper."

"Tell us stories, Granny," commanded Matthew; "tell us about the Manx fishin' fleet."

And Granny, pleased with an audience of industrious children, began:—

"It was a long while ago, the time I'm tellin' about, before thy mother was born it was, though it was a while after I was married to your grandfather Christane; a fine man he was too, an' handsome with it; an' knowin' he was about cattle, an' terrible cute about crops. I used to go to market in them days on me little pony with panniers. All the farmers' wives an' daughters did the like. It's too proud they're gettin' to do it now. Lovely it was too, ridin' along on a quiet evenin' with the panniers empty an' the money in me pocket, an' the sun goin' down, an' throwin' beautiful lights on the mountains. Beautiful it was with the sun sinkin' in the sea, an' the water all red an' gold. 'Twas a lovely evenin', an' well I remember the sun an' the sea, as I was ridin' home; not a breath of wind to stir a leaf on a tree; an' that night four hundred fishin' boats sailed out of Laxey. 'Twas in the year 1787, a lucky year your grandfather said, because it had two sevens in it; but he wasn't right at all, for it was the saddest year I can remember in me long life. At midnight a storm came along, and the wind blew an' blew, a tremenjus gale. And the poor fishermen, the souls! made for Douglas harbour. The night was black as ink, an' there was no lighthouse that year at all. Destroyed it was in a storm the year before, an' never put up again. There was only a small lantern, a bit of a thing hung from a pole on the ruins of the lighthouse, an' the first fishin' boat knocked it down. An' in the pitch dark the

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

fleet was comin' in ; four hundred boats, on them cruel rocks, an' the confusion was shockin' ; men screeching like animals ; an' the boats dashin' to pieces. An' on the shore was the poor women cryin' and screamin' for their men. An' in the morning 'twas a terrible sight, corpses floating in the harbour, an' dead men lyin' about on the sand, an' the women crowded on the shore cryin' an' wailin' for the men they'd lost."

"Is that all, Granny?" asked the fascinated Matthew.

"Ay! all enough, chile ; the like was never seen before, an' never will be again, with the new lighthouse there is."

"I'll be a farmer, Granny, not a fisherman," observed the cautious Matthew.

"Farmin's the best thing for thee, lad, with a bit of fishin' at times maybe for pastime ; and, children, we'll sing the old songs, before thee goes to bed, in the right Manx way ; but it's tea-time now."

Tea and frizzled fish with barley bread and plenty of good, fresh butter fell to the portion of Granny and Betty ; but for the children bowls of porridge and milk, with a bit of bread and honey afterwards.

After tea one candle was lit, and the party sat round the wood fire. Granny, Betty and the girls all occupied with knitting. Matthew was interested in the blue flames of the fire. "Why is it blue, Granny?"

"Because it is apple wood ; the ould apple tree came down at last, an' hundreds of years ould it was. Now, children, we'll sing the ould Manx songs," said Granny briskly.

Very old are the national airs of the Isle of Man, queer, crooning, mournful airs, that probably existed for ages in the ancient world before any words were sung to them.

Old Ned Karran came into the big kitchen with an ancient

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

fiddle out of which he scraped the old Manx tunes, and Granny, Betty and the children sang that curious old ballad, *Mylecharaine*, with its queer moaning lilt. Granny's Manx was sure and emphatic; Betty's halted; and the children hummed the familiar tune, putting in words of Manx when they could, and always singing in Manx the refrain, "Lonely didst thou leave me." The ballad is a weird dialogue between a father and daughter, and the translation runs:—

Daughter—

O Mylecharaine, where gott'st thou thy store?
Lonely didst thou leave me;

Father—

Did I not get it in the Curragh, deep, deep enough?
And lonely didst thou leave me.

Daughter—

O Mylecharaine, where gott'st thou thy stock?
Lonely didst thou leave me;

Father—

Did I not get it in the Curragh between two blocks?
And lonely didst thou leave me.

And so the dirge continues and the mystery deepens. What it is all about "nobody can rightly tell," so the writer was informed by an ancient lady, an authority on Manx lore. In the end there are "seven bitter curses" on Mylecharaine

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

for giving his daughter a dowry apparently, but the meaning is by no means clear.

Then the Evening Hymn was sung, Granny giving it out one line at a time in Manx, and requiring all the children to repeat it after her. And so the evening concluded, and the children were sent to bed.

After a while Betty went up to Mollie's room to see that Dorcas and Rosaleen were comfortable.

"Are you snug, then?" she asked.

"Snug enough," said Rosaleen; "listen, Aunt Betty, Granny is teaching Matthew his prayers in Manx."

"He never remembers it all," said Dorcas.

"Or the Latin either," added Rosaleen.

"Whist, children, whist," was Aunt Betty's comment, and through Granny's open door was heard her thin old Manx voice prompting:—

"As ny leeid shin ayns miolagh" (And lead us not into temptation).

And Matthew, kneeling on the bed in his grandfather's big nightshirt, repeated it after her.

"Thee must try to remember it, Matthew; thee will not always have Granny to teach thee."

"Yes," said Matthew cheerfully. "Granny, I shall make a snow man to-morrow."

"Perhaps; promise me, Matthew, always to say thy prayers in Manx."

"Yes," said Matthew. "Does God like Manx prayers better than Latin?"

"Yes," replied Granny positively. "Manx prayers is right. Latin is heathenish."

"Dorcas can say French prayers, Granny."

"French," said Granny, "is papish."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

§ ii

Matthew was capering about the room at dawn, tripping over his long nightshirt, and flapping the long sleeves. "It isn't snowin', Granny, an' everythin's white as white."

"Get into bed, Matthew; you'll get cold."

"I want to get up; Aunt Betty's gone down, an' the fire's lighted in the kitchen."

"Canst dress thyself?"

"I can, Granny; I always do."

"Then put on thy shirt an' breeches, Matthew, an' go to Aunt Betty to be washed."

Matthew obeyed willingly and in a quarter of an hour he was in the courtyard collecting snow for his snow man. It was a clear, still morning, and Matthew danced in the snow, and laughed with joy when he sank up to his knees. His shrieks aroused a great shaggy beast, asleep in a shed without a door, where the grindstone was kept; the beast arose, crept out of the shed, and approached the boy. Matthew happened to look around, and to his horror saw a great bear. With a scream and a sob he flung himself into the back kitchen and pushed the door to, bolting it.

"A bear, a bear," he screamed.

"Don't be silly, Matthew," said Aunt Betty.

"It is a bear, a great big, hairy bear."

"Don't tell stories," insisted Betty.

"'Deed now, Miss Christane, there's somethin' quare in the yard, there's terrible quare footprints; I'm thinkin' it's the ould Devil himself," said the farm-woman.

Betty went to the window and saw nothing.

"Look, Miss Christane, the footprints."

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

"They are odd," reflected Betty. "Matthew, what makes you think it is a bear?"

"I've got a picture, Aunt Betty. I know a bear," said Matthew, bolting the other bolt.

"The Lord have mercy on us! look, then, look," cried the farm-woman.

Betty and Matthew looked through the window. There, sure enough, was a great dancing bear, erect on his haunches, doing his tricks with a broom handle, the remnants of a chain dangled behind him.

"Well, if ever, Mrs. Duff!" was Betty's ejaculation. Granny and the three girls were called to witness the extraordinary spectacle of a bear dancing in the snow, unattended, in a Manx stackyard.

"The creature must have a keeper," said Mrs. Christane, for dancing bears were not uncommon sights in both town and country early in the nineteenth century.

"It's hungry, the crathur," said the farm-woman.

"What do bears eat, Granny?" asked the excited children.

"Turnips most likely."

In a closet under the stairs turnips were stored, and the children ran upstairs and threw turnips out of the window. To their wild excitement and joy the bear caught some of them, crunching them with gusto.

"Bears like honey," cried Dorcas, who was searching her reading book for information on the habits of the animal, and she smeared a piece of barley bread with honey and threw it out. The bear devoured it greedily and seemed to ask for more.

"Shee bannee mee!" exclaimed Granny, "we can't shut ourselves in here all the time feeding it. Run thou to Mr. Caine, Betty."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"No, mother, I'll not go outside with that thing about at all."

"What 'ill we do then?"

Nobody knew. "It almost caught me," boasted Matthew, "when I was making my snow man."

A knocking at the front door relieved the situation. It proved to be a party of men armed with sticks and guns to warn the people to keep indoors, for a couple of bears had escaped from a menagerie and were traced to Ballasalla.

"There's one of the bastes in my stackyard," said Granny grimly. "I'll be pleased enough for you to take it away."

The keeper, after much coaxing, beguiled Bruin to him, and adjusted his chains, and the frightened bear was glad enough to go into captivity again, the snow not being to his liking. During the day the other bear was captured, and this is what had happened. Polio's menagerie had arrived in Douglas, and on the previous day had set out to go from Douglas to Castletown. The snowdrifts had caused the caravans to overturn, and tigers, lions and bears had escaped. The tigers and lions, terrified of the snow, were easily recaptured, but the bears had gone farther afield, and were lost in the darkness.

Matthew's adventure with a live bear, and Matthew's snow man, were among the most vivid events of his boyhood.

§ iii

It was a glorious day, as mild as May and just as beautiful, with the sun shining full on Derbyhaven Bay. Bride Quilliam was alone on the shore gathering tiny pinkish shells to make a necklace. Pete bored holes in them and

BEARS IN GRANNY'S STACKYARD

the children threaded them. The tide was full in. Bride went to the very edge of the water and laughed with joy at the beauty before her. The gulls crying over Ronaldsway, and the lapping of the water on the shore at her feet, were the only sounds she heard. The sea before her was a glittering mass of shifting lights and colours. The horizon was blotted out by an ivory and primrose haze ; far away, patches of purple flecked the blue waters ; nearer, the emerald depths shaded off into pale jade as the wavelets broke on the shingle at her feet. " It is like heaven," thought the child, and she knelt down at the water's edge and said the Lord's Prayer half aloud. Then she repeated the Morning Hymn, " Awake, my soul." She felt comforted and bathed in the beauty of sea and sky, and before she rose from her knees she said, " Thank God for the sun and the sea. Amen." She began to picture heaven to herself. It was like the scene before her ; but one could walk on the beautiful waters. One had great white wings, and could fly like the gulls. Bride watched one dipping into the water. " There was no night there," it would always be beautiful, and the sun always shining, and so Bride dreamed her child's dream of heaven. Then she turned towards the road, and she wanted to cry with pain at the ugliness and untidiness of the scene.

Old inverted boats and lobster pots were strewn about the shore, which was disfigured by the refuse thrown from the houses, and the entrails of hake and conger left by the fishermen. Pigs, poultry and geese were picking among the refuse ; a ship had unloaded a cargo of timber at her father's house, and it was all piled up in the front garden and lay about the road. Pigs had been killed recently and pools of blood lay about the shore meandering among the untidy refuse. The beauty of the sea and the horror of the land

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

gripped Bride's soul, and she wailed aloud in anguish, and ran blindly into a pool of blood. Her foot slipped and she fell, screaming with terror, as her hands and clothes were splashed with blood. A fisherman picked her up; he had been sitting smoking on an inverted boat. He carried the sobbing, screaming child home, and delivered her to Phrancis Parr.

Kitty turned pale at the sight of her. "Is the child hurt, Phrancis?" she asked.

"Never a hurt, she has fallen into a nasty pool of blood, the little soul."

Bride was comforted, bathed, and put into clean clothes, but she continued to cry at intervals until bedtime, and even in her sleep she sobbed in her ugly dreams.

"The child shall never play on the shore again," said Kitty in tears. "She shall go to Fanny Fisher's school every morning and Patience shall go with her."

CHAPTER XVII

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

"No one lives in external truth, but in the warm phantasmagoric chamber of the brain, with the painted window and the storied wall."—*R. L. Stevenson.*

§ i

FANNY FISHER came from Whitehaven. Her husband was drowned in a fishing boat off Derbyhaven, and his widow settled there, hoping that his body might be washed ashore, and she could bury it decently. She rented from Mrs. Quayle her big front room facing the sea. She paid one shilling a week for her room.

"A powerful lot of money it is, ma'am," said Mrs. Quayle to Kitty; "it comes to more than two pounds a year, and it is only three pounds a year we are payin' for the whole house an' garden."

"I am glad it is a help to you," said Kitty.

"'Tis indeed, ma'am, an' I've given her the little cupboard under the stairs for her coals; an' you wouldn't believe the nice she's made the parlour."

Mrs. Fisher's brother brought her belongings across in a fishing boat. A four-post bed, a table, a few chairs, a clothes press, and a sea chest. To make a living Mrs. Fisher opened a little shop. She sold nobs, peppermint sticks, pink and white, snuff, tobacco, and tea. She also sold peg-tops, marbles, and skipping-ropes. She used to buy a pound of tea at a time and sell it by the two pennyworth to poor folk. To supplement the profits of the shop, Mrs. Fisher opened a little school. The equipment of the school

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

was simple. She bought secondhand from the alehouse, two discarded benches ; she paid sixpence for them. These cut down served as seats for the scholars. Upon her table she placed her Bible and a rod made of twigs ; and the school was complete. It is true that the light was dim, for the window was blocked with merchandise, and the four-post bed encumbered and darkened the room ; but these trifles did not daunt Fanny Fisher. It was a handsome four-post bed. Its posts were carved delicately by one Hepplewaite. Nearly one hundred years later it was bought in London as a present for a Cabinet Minister who collected antiques. Mrs. Fisher regarded it as a comfortable resting place, though occasionally she paused a moment to admire the delightful polish her strenuous rubbing had given the mahogany. She was a clean, quick, capable body ; and a good example to her neighbours of thrift and industry.

So it came about that Patience and Bride Quilliam attended Mrs. Fisher's school daily with five other little ones, who occupied the two benches. The scholars read aloud, spelled aloud, and wrote copies on their slates. They learned to make figures, to do little addition sums and to repeat the multiplication tables. They learned the Collects, the Catechism, texts from the Bible, Dr. Watts' hymns, and the poems of Jane and Ann Taylor. Patience made a sampler, and Bride knitted garters which were presented to Grandmamma and Granny Christane. One never-to-be-forgotten day in the annals of Fanny Fisher's school, the parson's lady, Mrs. Quine, with an English lady, called to see the school. The room was clean, the floor freshly sanded. The window was polished, and the jars of sweets and marbles shone brightly. Four little girls sat knitting and making samplers on one bench ; and on the other, three little boys

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

were making string bags. They crocheted the stout string with chain stitch into market bags, and their mothers lined them with stout jean. These bags lasted a lifetime. Mrs. Fisher, in clean cap and apron, sat reading the Bible to her flock. It was a chapter from Revelations : " And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled ; and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Bride listened fascinated ; her garter dropped on the floor. The angel was Mannanan, of course, and he bound the old dragon in chains instead of spells ; and the bottomless pit was under Castle Rushen, and under Ronaldsway, perhaps under her very feet, deep down. Bride drew up her feet a little and shivered. A bottomless pit was a pit that never came to an end, and the poor Dragon was still falling, and falling for a thousand years. Bride stared fascinated.

" What is it, Bride ? " asked Mrs. Fisher.

" Why didn't they put him to sleep with a book under his head, and a sword beside him ? " she asked.

At that moment Mrs. Quine and the English lady entered. Mrs. Fisher curtseyed, and the children stood up.

" What was the little girl saying ? " asked Mrs. Quine pleasantly.

Bride was required to repeat her question. Scarlet with shyness, she did so.

" Why go to sleep, dear ? " asked the lady.

" The old dragon, like the giants under Castle Rushen,

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

with a book and a sword. I don't like him to fall and fall in the bottomless pit."

The lady looked at Mrs. Fisher.

"I am reading Revelations, Mrs. Quine," she said.

"I don't understand, my dear," said the lady to Bride.

At this Bride began to cry. Why were grown-up people so stupid? she wondered.

"Don't cry," urged the lady; "what is the matter?"

"Stand up, Bride, and tell us," commanded Mrs. Fisher.

Bride sobbed louder. "The poor Dragon," she gasped.

"I want him to go to sleep like the giants."

"The child is feverish," said Mrs. Quine. "Give her a drink of water and put her to lie down on the bed."

In spite of Bride's protests she had to lie down, still sobbing. Then the parson's wife read the Sermon on the Mount aloud, and Bride stopped her sobs to listen to the beautiful voice. "Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted."

"The simple words of Jesus Christ are less exciting for little children than Revelations," said the lady to Mrs. Fisher.

"I read straight through the New Testament, and then I begin the Old," explained Mrs. Fisher impartially. "No word of the good book should be omitted."

"Indeed, no," agreed the English lady.

The lady then inquired into the success of the shop, and finally bought all the sweets and marbles in the window to distribute to the little scholars. There was a particularly big and attractive pink and white sugar stick, which caught the greedy eye of Patience, and she pushed forward to secure it. But Mrs. Fisher saw her, and she said out loud before the visitors: "Little girls must not push, and must not be greedy."

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

Patience, crimson with shame, was sent to the bottom of the class, and had to wait until all the others were served before she received anything. The English lady gave the big sugar stick to Bride, and a packet of nobs. She also gave her half a dozen marbles and a fine blood alley.

Bride received them shyly. "May I give the blood alley and marbles to Matthew?" she whispered.

"Of course, my dear, it is nice to give things, and who is Matthew?"

"My brother," explained Bride; "and may I get off the bed? I am quite well, thank you."

The lady lifted her off and whispered to her: "Had you been hearing fairy tales?"

"Yes," said Bride, "about the giants asleep till the end of the world, and I was sorry for the Dragon."

"Poor Dragon," said the lady, kissing the little girl.

Bride felt comforted, and on the way home she gave half her sugar stick to Patience.

"I won't tell them about you lying on the bed and your dragons," promised a softened Patience.

§ ii

Jude Kameen was uneasy in his mind after Mollie went to Liverpool. What did the girl know? What could she find out? Stephen was safely out of the way; but he had never imagined Mollie would be true to him. He had plenty of money to offer the girl, and she would not look at him. It is hard for a man to realize that himself and his wealth can be withstood by a woman. Jude Kameen was almost alone in the world; both his children had died of

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

diphtheria, and if he did not marry, he had vague notions of taking the little John Henry from his grandmother in Liverpool, and owning him as his son, but these thoughts were fleeting. Overshadowing everything in his life was a sick dread, which blotted out all his zest and enjoyment, a dread of discovery, of prison, of transportation. He was a haunted man, haunted by fear and dread of the future. Now any psychologist will tell you that fear has an immense effect upon the mind. It leads to hysteria, neurasthenia, and a variety of ills; indeed, but for fear, barring accidents, mortals might easily live to be centenarians. Jude Kameen was in a state of worry and abject terror; and like many another man he took to drink to drown his cares, and he drank brandy in dreadful solitude; for he feared that he might babble about his guilt if he drank in company. Brandy is a fearsome drink if constantly taken to excess; and Jude Kameen was becoming a nervous wreck. He was afraid of the dark, afraid to be alone, afraid of the shadows on the walls, afraid of seeing himself in a looking-glass. He kept a candle always burning in his bedroom, and a bottle of brandy beside him.

His dreams were often wild and dreadful. He was being pursued by monsters; he was being dragged by huge serpents to the depths of the sea; he was for ever falling from perilous heights. Sometimes he was in the dock, and sentenced to be hanged; then with a loud cry, and bathed in perspiration, he would awake. Like all Manx folk, Jude Kameen was superstitious; and he determined to consult Phœbe Fell, for an interpretation of his alarming dreams. He had known the old woman when he was a boy, in the days when he used to visit his Aunt Quirk in Castletown. She was dead long ago, and her only daughter, Eliza, was a dressmaker in Mill

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

Street. He would go and see Eliza ; perhaps if his terrors increased, he might ask her to come and live with him. Eliza was about the only relative he possessed, besides little John Henry in Liverpool. Eliza was the daughter of his father's only sister. He had almost forgotten her. She was poor, and it is easy to forget poor relations.

Eliza Quirk was startled one day when Jude rode up to her door in the narrow little street. "Where'll I put the horse, Eliza?" he said.

"Why, Jude, how ill you look. I shouldn't have known you."

"I'm off my oats," he said, pretending to laugh.

"Put the horse in Jemmy Cannel's stable. It is just down the road."

"Accommodation for man and beast is it? Well, Eliza, I'll be back in an hour or so, I've business to transact."

"I'll get thee some tea, then."

"Good girl," said Jude, as he led his horse to Jemmy Cannel's little inn. Then he made his way to Phœbe Fell's.

The old woman was within, making dill water for young babies.

"Come thy ways in, Mr. Jude Kameen," she said.

"You haven't forgotten me, Phœbe?"

"I have not," said Phœbe; "and what is it your wantin' with me at all?"

"A call, Phœbe, for old times' sake," he laughed.

"And time is not treating thee well at all," said the old woman, looking at him shrewdly. "It's hunted you look."

"I'm not sleeping, Phœbe, an' I've bad dream s."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Ay! an' maybe thou'rt drinkin' a lil' sup too."

Jude laughed. "Come, Phœbe, can you tell me the meanin' of my dreams?"

"I cannot, then," and Phœbe shook her head.

"Tell me my fortune, then," he coaxed, and he held out his hand.

Phœbe looked steadily at him. "I'll lay the cards for thee," she said. "Come, shuffle them well now, and think hard of thyself all the time."

Jude did as he was told.

Phœbe looked long at the cards. "It's fear that's doin' on thee," she said. "There's wrong doin's behind the fear. There's a middlin' dark woman between colours she is. She's no love for thee at all, and she will find out all thy wrong-doin's."

Jude blenched, but he pretended to laugh.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"All enough, man," she said.

"But what comes after when the woman finds me out?"

"Nawthin', nawthin' at all."

"And can't you tell me more, Phœbe?"

"I cannot," and Phœbe put away the cards.

Jude laid half a crown on the table.

"Here, Mr. Kameen, is a nice thing for thee to drink; leave the brandy alone for a while and drink a spoonful of this in a cup of spring water, now and then."

"All right, Phœbe," he said, pocketing the bottle.

"Poor soul! poor soul!" mused Phœbe, when he was gone. "It's his death I'm thinkin', an' his evil deeds comin' home to him."

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

§ iii

Letter from Ann Fannin to Mollie Christane :—

“ My dear Mollie,

I hope you are quite well, as this leaves me at present. I have heard from Stephen. He is managing a farm for one of the officers. The one that married the lady from your school. He's asking a lot about you in his letter. There's queer tales of Mr. Jude Kameen. He's drinking a lot, folks say. He is often ill. You remember Eliza Quirk, her that's dressmaking in Mill Street. She is his cousin. She has been twice in Douglas staying there, he is so ill at times. Her and me went to school together and we have kept friends. She thinks Mr. Jude Kameen is frightened of something. He won't be alone, and he won't be in the dark. I wish you would come back, Mollie, to find things out. I am sure he stole his own horse, and accused Stephen. Now here is a chance to come home. Mrs. Gelling, her that has the lady's school in Castletown, is going to England for six months to keep house for her son till he marries. He is marrying Sophie Skillicorn. She wants someone nice to look after her school, while she is away. I told her about you, and she said to write to you. The school is in the big front room at Mrs. Mylchreest's in Malew Street, there is a little room behind as well. All the best children of Castletown go to Mrs. Gelling's school. She hopes you will come, so do I. It would be nice if you were here to find out Jude Kameen, perhaps Eliza Quirk might help, but she likes her cousin Jude and is sorry for him.

I remain, dear Mollie,

Your ever affectionate friend,

Ann Fannin.”

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Mollie pondered over the letter. It was now nearly two years since she had come to Liverpool. She had Stephen's last letter in her pocket at this moment with a letter from Mrs. Harry Boyden. This is what Isabel wrote :—

“ Dear Miss Christane,

I was glad to hear from you, but it seems to take a lifetime for a letter to get across the sea from you. I have seen Mr. Fannin once, and I think he is a fine man. Harry says he has always had good conduct reports. Harry applied for him to help in his farm. We have a grant of land at George's River, which is about seventeen miles from Sydney. It is such a pretty place. Some day we will build a nice house there ; but just at present Harry is fencing the land (we have three hundred and forty acres). We are going to keep cows for our own butter, and some sheep ; and Harry will have some brood mares. He got a number of prisoners allotted to him ; and he has made Mr. Fannin foreman. He will manage the farm for us when it is finished. Harry thinks that in a year or two he can get him a conditional pardon ; but if further evidence could be got, it would be delightful for him to have a full pardon at once, and then you could come out and have a farm near us. I am very happy, but this is a big place, and it would be nice to have you. Harry sends his kind regards.!

From your affectionate friend,

Isabel Boyden.”

Mollie reflected on this letter also. “ I will go and see Mrs. Caroline Dawes,” she said to herself, “ and see if I can get her to talk at all.”

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

Every fortnight Mrs. Dawes had brought "John Henry" for Mollie to see, and the usual letter to Mr. Jude Kameen was written. She became friendly with the old woman, and once or twice Mollie had been to see her, but Mrs. Dawes was very reticent when the stolen horse was mentioned. "I can but try again," was Mollie's reflection.

§ iii

On the following Sunday afternoon, Mollie left Miss Julia to perform all duties and set off to walk to Mallowfield Lodge. It was a pretty little place with a nice garden. It was now let furnished, for Mr. Kameen could not bring his mind to sell it outright. In the little lodge at the gate lived Mrs. Caroline Dawes, her deaf sister, and John Henry.

The deaf woman still did the cooking at the house, and Mollie found Mrs. Dawes alone, for John Henry had gone to play with a school friend. Mrs. Dawes welcomed Mollie warmly, and over the teacups the two became confidential.

"I sometimes think," said Mrs. Dawes, "that he will take the child from me, and educate him proper like a gentleman."

"It might be good for the boy," said Mollie, "if his father is a good man, of course."

"He drinks," allowed the old woman, "and I think he's a cunning rascal; and if he tries to take the boy from me, he shall know what I know."

"Oh," said Mollie, "it must be something big if it gives you power over him."

"It is big, so big that sometimes I don't sleep with

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

thinking of it ; if I could write myself, I'd many a time have a mind to write and tell him what I know."

"Why don't you go and see him?" asked Mollie.

"He'd murder me, and it's the boy I'm thinkin' of. It is such a secret that my sister knows nothin' of it."

"It must be hard to keep a big secret like that ; and if there is any wickedness in it, that makes it harder for you."

"It does," said the old woman ; "in church on Sundays I'm thinking and thinking of it, and many's the time I never sleep at all at night."

Mollie waited patiently. She knew that to share a secret was a relief to an overburdened mind, and she had a premonition that something of importance was to be imparted to her.

"I don't want to harm the boy's father," wept Mrs. Dawes, "but look at the harm he did to my daughter, my poor Fanny. He's a wicked man, but I want him to do his duty to John Henry."

"Of course," said Mollie.

"It's this way, Miss Christane. I must tell someone. I don't want to die with it on my conscience. Will you promise never to tell a living creature if I tell you?"

Mollie reflected. "I'll never tell anyone but Mr. Jude Kameen himself," she said at last. "I am leaving Liverpool and going to the Isle of Man to live for awhile, and I might meet Mr. Kameen and tell him."

"I'd like him to know," said Mrs. Dawes. "If he knew that I knew his wickedness, he'd leave the boy with me and yet do right by him. Why, Miss Christane, I could get Jude Kameen transported anytime."

"Transported!" echoed Mollie, growing pale.

"Yes, transported, and I'll tell you all about it. It was

FANNY FISHER'S SCHOOL

in September, nearly two years ago. I mind the time, because Mr. Nathaniel Quine had not long died, and I was in the little lodge with John Henry. My sister was sleeping in the house, because Mr. Jude Kameen was there. I'd gone to bed at night, and the cat was out of doors. It kep' on mewin and mewin, and I could not sleep, and I got up and opened the front door a little, and waited in the dark for the cat to come in. I saw a man with a dark lantern come out of the big house, and a shawl in his hand. He broke the kitchen window with the shawl, and it made no noise. Then he took the stable key and hid it under the stone trough. And the man was Mr. Jude Kameen."

Mollie listened breathlessly. "What did you do then?" she asked.

"There was nothing for me to do. In the morning I heard that a Manxman had stolen the horse; it was a Mr. Stephen Fannin. I dared not speak for I had nothing to live on, and I wanted the child. But I'd have spoken if they'd have hanged the man."

"They didn't hang him?" said Mollie.

"No; they transported him to Australia."

"I'll see Mr. Jude Kameen," said Mollie, "and tell him what you know."

"You'll not breathe a word to another living soul, Miss Christane?"

"I will not," said Mollie.

"There is more than that. I've got a letter written by Mr. Fannin to Mr. Kameen to say he'd lost the horse at Congleton, and saying he would pay for it."

Mollie became as pale as death. "A letter," she gasped. "How did you get it?"

"Mr. Jude Kameen dropped it out of his pocket by the

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

lodge gate, and I picked it up. I took it to Hannah, Mrs. Boys' daughter, and she read it to me."

"Don't you know, Mrs. Dawes, that an innocent man is a convict in Australia, and the letter would have saved him?"

Mrs. Dawes sobbed. "Yes, I know now, but I hadn't known what was in the letter then, and I was afraid, I was afraid," and she wiped her eyes and moaned.

"Where is the letter?"

"It's hid away."

"Well, will you give it to me?"

"I am afraid I'm a wicked woman, but I did not know. They won't put me in prison, will they?"

"No," said Mollie firmly, "but you must give the letter."

"I won't; I daren't," sobbed Mrs. Dawes.

Mollie could not move her. "But an innocent man is suffering," she said.

"I know, I know. I'm an unhappy woman. Afraid to live, and afraid to die."

After further persuasion Mrs. Dawes said she would send the letter to the Isle of Man. "I've got to find it," she said, "and it's hid far away from here."

Mollie had to be content with this promise. She directed an envelope to herself in the Isle of Man and gave it to the old woman.

"I'll send it when I get it; I want to be at peace with my God," she said.

"I'll come to fetch it if you don't send it," declared Mollie; "think of the poor man accused wrongfully."

"I do, I do; and I never sleep thinking of him," sobbed Mrs. Dawes.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN

“They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.”—*Isaiab.*

§ i

MRS. MARDON was disconsolate when Mollie made known her intention of leaving Liverpool.

“Never again, my dear, will I find another like you; the school is doubled in numbers, and the parents satisfied; and the young ladies so improved in their education,” she said.

“It is kind of you to say so,” replied Mollie gratefully. “Would you be so good as to write to Mrs. Gelling, of Castletown, to say that I am quite able to look after her school?”

“I will write twenty letters for you, Miss Christane, if you wish; and you must promise me to find another lady from your island to help with my school.”

“I will do what I can,” promised Mollie.

The arrangement with Mrs. Gelling concerning the school was satisfactorily concluded by letter; and there was rejoicing at Ballasalla and Derbyhaven when it was known that Mollie was coming home.

“We’ll be havin’ all meals in the dinin’-parlour now,” said Mrs. Christane. “Mollie’s a lady now an’ accustomed to the like.”

“’Deed then we’ll have breakfast in the front kitchen, an’ not goin’ makin’ two fires early in the day at all,” declared Betty, “but dinner an’ supper is different.”

“I’ll be seein’ Miss Fitzsimmons an’ gettin’ me silk gown

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

fixed up a bit. It's fine folks Mollie's been mixing with across the water, an' we must be genteel."

"Mollie must take me as I am," laughed Betty.

Both mother and sister were a little awed when Mollie arrived. She was even more beautiful than they had remembered; quiet, almost stately, yet with an appealing gentleness of manner.

"I'm glad to see thee, girl," said her mother. "You've grown, Mollie, and grown different."

"I've learnt a good deal, mother," said Mollie, "and God has been very good to me."

"Fancy Mollie bein' mistress of Mrs. Gelling's school," said Betty, "an' the children of all the ladies of Castletown at it. There's the Christophers, the Quiggans, the Cashens, the Caleys, an' the Quanes all sendin' the children there. What 'ill you teach them at all?"

Mollie smiled. "I'll find plenty to teach," she said.

Granny looked at Mollie and marvelled. This tall, gracious, beautiful creature her daughter, her own little Mollie, who used to make the butter and look after the hens, going to teach the children of the gentry in Castletown. Well! Liverpool was a wonderful place, and Mollie was a good girl. She hoped that all the nonsense about Stephen Fannin was over. "I'm sending Dinah to thee, to school, just to put a polish on her," and Dinah, a lanky child of thirteen, looked at Mollie and smiled.

"An' Kitty's sendin' Dorcas and Rosaleen," said Betty, "just for a year or so before they go to a sewing school to learn fine needlework."

"I think the fine and delicate neddlework can be taught at Mrs. Gelling's school," said Mollie.

"But they're teachin' how to make silk pictures in frames

THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN

now," went on Betty. "Miss Jessop, Parson Quine's wife's sister, is teachin' it in Douglas, an' the pictures are more like real than real paintings."

"I daresay I could teach it too," said Mollie.

"You?" cried the astonished Betty; "well, you have learnt a lot in Liverpool."

"Thee shalt teach Dinah to make a silk picture for Granny's best parlour," said the gratified Mrs. Christane. "Mrs. Cashen of Ballapot has one in her best parlour, the 'Christian Martyrs' they're callin' it, the men that was burnt in London by a wicked queen, an' the lovely gould frame on it cost as much as two guineas."

"Dinah shall make you a picture, mother," promised Mollie, "and Dorcas shall make one for Kitty."

Across the big fields of golden corn Mollie walked to Derbyhaven; the sea beyond the last big field was blue, impossibly blue, Mollie thought, for there is no blue on earth so entrancing as the blue of the sea across a cornfield on a hot August day; and against the colour of the sea, the corn seemed shot with pale mauve, while above hung the glorious turquoise sky. Mollie rejoiced in the beauty around her. "There's nothing in Liverpool to equal this," she said to herself, "and I shall leave it all when I go to Australia."

Kitty and the children welcomed Mollie warmly. The children had grown and improved. Dorcas, capable, self-possessed and domestic; Rosaleen, with her elfin charm, wayward and artistic; Patience, thrifty and sensible; and Bride still imaginative and incomprehensible.

"It's glad I am to see thee, Mollie," said Kitty, "an' how nice you look, just like a lady."

Mollie smiled. "And Dorcas and Rosaleen are to come to me in Castletown," she said.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"It's time they left Mr. Teare's school at Ballasalla. They want a polish, as mother says ; the boys get rough at times, and there's no French taught there. Mother's changed, Mollie, since you went to Liverpool. She's that proud you wouldn't think of the book-learnin' you've got ; and she wants the girls to grow up like thee."

"Not all of them, surely," said Mollie. "Why, who is this dainty lady?"

It was little Faith, now about three ; a delightful toddler, with Mollie's sea-blue eyes and a mass of dark hair. "Come to Aunt Mollie?" she coaxed, and Faith went instantly.

"She's like you, Mollie ; look at the little teeth of her, and the pretty little dimples. She's mother's pet, she is," said her proud mother.

§ ii

Jude Kameen had been drinking ever since he heard that Mollie was coming home. He sat in his parlour in his nightshirt and an old overcoat, drinking steadily. He drank brandy, always brandy, and he drank it alone. The room was dirty, for he would not have it touched, he neither washed, combed, nor shaved ; a dirty, hideous, dishevelled object he looked, as he lolled on his sofa, his bare feet thrust into large woollen slippers, drinking—always drinking. Sometimes he slumbered, breathing stertorously, then he would wake in a panic, drink some brandy, and babble incoherent curses. His housekeeper, Mrs. Kezia Lace, was in despair. For some days she had not been able to get him into his bedroom at all, and his parlour and his person were indescribably filthy. He refused all food, sometimes for

THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN

forty-eight hours ; and then he would shout angrily for kidneys, toast, poached eggs, and toasted cheese. At all hours of the day and night Mrs. Lace had to be on the alert to satisfy his fits of hunger. He refused to see a doctor, locking himself in when the housekeeper sent for one, and cursing at him through the keyhole. "He will kill himself, Mrs. Lace," said Dr. Cornelius Key, "unless you can get him to stop drinking."

"I can do nothing with him, sir," moaned Mrs. Lace.

"Has he no relations that could influence him?"

"There's only Miss Eliza Quirk of Castletown, an' sometimes he sends for her when he's bad."

"Send for her now, Mrs. Lace," commanded Dr. Cornelius Key, "and tell her that unless she can get him to pull himself together, the man will die."

Eliza Quirk came at the urgent summons of Mrs. Lace.

"I can't do nothing with him, Miss Quirk," she complained. "He's worse than ever ; he's not been dressed for a fortnight, nor in his bed for a week. He can drink two or three bottles of brandy a day."

"Does he eat at all?" asked the capable Miss Quirk.

"When the fit is on him ; last night at near twelve o'clock it was, he began roarin' for food like a madman. He ate seven poached eggs, two grilled kidneys, an' two roun's of toast covered thick with toasted cheese. Then he drank hot brandy punch, an' slept like a log on the flure for hours, snorin' like a pig. I covered him up with blankets. What more could a body do?"

"Nothin'," said Miss Quirk. "I'll be goin' to him now."

Miss Quirk opened the parlour door, which Jude used as a study. The drunken man sprawled on the sofa breathing loudly. He was an impossible, indescribable object, with

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

all the humanity out of him. His hands and face filthy, one bare, dirty leg thrust out from the folds of an old overcoat, his dank, lifeless, grey hair disordered, a nasty scratch on the bald portion of his head, and the vein on his left temple swollen and throbbing, his chin and cheeks unshaven, and an unsightly growth of hair sprouting. He half-opened his slaty-green eyes as Eliza entered the reeking, foul-smelling room. "It's you, Eliza?" he said.

"Yes, it's me, Jude Kameen."

"And what do you think of me, Eliza, hey?"

"I think," said Eliza firmly, "that you are a disgustin' lookin' old man."

"Old, I'm not old; who says I'm old? I'm forty-four, Eliza; too old for pretty Mollie, hey?"

"You are very dirty, Jude. Wash yourself an' get dressed decent. You are filthy."

Jude Kameen began to cry. "I'm alone," he wailed, "alone an' in distress; an' shunned by me nearest relation."

"Don't make a *gorm* of thyself, Jude," said Eliza briskly. "Get up, an' wash, an' come an' have a cup of tea with me."

"I will *not*, Eliza," said Jude with drunken solemnity. "What' ye come here for? To insult me?"

"I've come to help thee, Jude; now be good and let me wash thy hands an' face."

Jude glanced fearfully round. "Will you stay with me, Eliza?"

"Yes, if you will behave proper."

Jude sobbed. "There's things come to me in the night, shadows, ghosts, corpses, dead men an' green devils," and he howled pitifully.

"Hush, hush," soothed Eliza. "Wait a minute, an' I'll get warm water an' bathe thy poor face."

THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN

Jude allowed her to sponge his face and hands, crying weakly all the time. "Have you nothin' better to put on than the old overcoat?" she asked.

Mrs. Lace brought his plaid dressing-gown. "Get him to bed, Miss Quirk," she counselled, "an' I'll clean this room out."

"There's thy clean bed ready, all cool an' nice," soothed Eliza, "an' the window open, an' the smell of the sea comin' in, an' the sun. Come, Jude, an' I'll have tea with thee when you're in your bed."

Presently she persuaded the miserable wretch to put the dressing-gown on, and lie in his bed. Then she bathed his hot forehead and hands with cold water and lavender scent. Jude lay still. "That's nice, girl," he said.

He fell into an uneasy doze before the tea came; and an hour later he was roaring for oysters, and beefsteak and onions. He was a trying patient, but Eliza Quirk remained with him two days.

§ iii

Three days later Jude Kameen, clothed, shaved, clean and fairly sober, was in his office in Drumgold Street, trying to overtake the neglected business letters that lay on his desk. Michael Quilliam on horseback dismounted at the door of Jude's office, gave the bridle of his horse to an urchin to hold for him, and went in. Jude, with bloodshot eyes, shaking hands, and a bottle of brandy on the table, greeted him.

"It's about the piece of land I'm buying," began Michael. "It's a long time now you've had it in hand."

"Yes, Mr. Quilliam, yes, it's terrible busy I am," and

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Jude shuffled with his shaky hands among his papers, to find notes to refresh his memory. Then he helped himself to a glass of brandy and offered Michael the bottle.

"It's too early for me yet," said Michael. "It's not suiting me to drink in the morning at all."

"Doctor's orders," remarked Jude carelessly.

Just then an inquisitive duck stepped in from the street with a loud "Quack, quack," and in a lumbering flat-footed fashion solemnly perambulated the office, pompously wagging the tail portion of its body. Jude started, watched the duck furtively, beads of perspiration broke on his forehead, and the vein in his left temple stood out throbbing. He hastily drank a glass of brandy, then glanced furtively at the duck again, and as furtively at Michael. Then another duck stepped in with a "Quack, quack," and followed the perambulations of the first one. Michael went on talking indifferently about the weather and the crops; and Jude with difficulty restrained himself from screaming aloud. There they were again; sometimes it was green devils, little, little devils with fiery tails; sometimes little snakes purple and pink, thousands of them writhing together on the floor in loathsome masses, and they always came to him at home. Never before had they followed him to the office. White ducks, oh God! could he never escape? and his hands shook as he pretended to search among his papers.

"Why do you have ducks about the place?" asked Michael. "Is it a new kind of pet you've got?" and his eyes followed the movement of the ducks.

"Good God," burst out Jude in huge relief. "You don't mean to say they are real?"

"Real enough," laughed Michael. "Shoo, shoo," and he drove the birds out into the street.

THE SAD STATE OF JUDE KAMEEN

Jude sat down trembling. "I thought I was seein' things that were not there."

"They were ducks sure enough," Michael assured him.

Jude helped himself to a drink of brandy. "And how is Miss Mollie Christane?" he asked.

"Well," said Michael, "and smart."

"Is she as handsome as ever?"

"Handsomer, I'm thinkin'. She's got a grand way with her, has Mollie."

"She's the woman I ought to have married," said Jude, "and it's a different man I'd have been to-day, had she married me. She's the prettiest girl in the Isle of Man."

"She is so," agreed Michael, and to himself he said, "but God help her, had she married thee."

Jude finished his bottle after Michael had gone, and then he went home and shut himself in his parlour, drinking brandy all the day and night alone. The thought of Mollie frightened him. Why had she come back? And why had she gone away? What did she know about him? She was plotting against him. She had gone to Liverpool to spy into his concerns! She said he had stolen his own horse. What had she found out? Had Jerry Koteen played him false? Fear dominated him. In abject terror he sat all night, with candles lighted, drinking, and thinking of the evils that might come to him. Michael rode home, thinking too. "Queer it is," he said to himself, "that a nice girl like Mollie should have driven one man to drink, and another to a convict prison; and Mollie so faithful and true."

CHAPTER XIX

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

"In tragic life, God wot
No villain need be ! Passions spin the plot,
We are betrayed by what is false within."

G. Meredith.

"I suppose it's God that makes when He wills
Them beautiful things—with the lift of His hills,
And the waft of His winds, and His calm and His storms,
And that's how He forms
A simple wench to be true and free,
And to move like a piece of poetry."

T. E. Brown.

§ i

MRS. GELLING'S school in Malew Street had nineteen scholars among the genteelest families in the neighbourhood of Castletown. When Dinah, Dorcas and Rosaleen Quilliam joined, the numbers went up to twenty-two. Mollie had plenty to do. She walked from Ballasalla every morning and arrived at her school before nine o'clock. She had completely mastered now the elements of English, Grecian, and Roman History, thanks to her careful study of Mrs. Trimmer's handy little books in the leather covers, with the curious woodcuts. She had made a careful study of English grammar, thanks to Mr. Lindley Murray's kind gifts and advice ; and she could teach parsing without the aid of Mrs. Box's exercise book. Her French had greatly improved ; she had read a fair amount of English literature ; and she even excelled Miss Julia in the art of delicate needle-

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

work. She became very famous in the Isle of Man in after years for the silk pictures she taught the older girls to make. Two hours every afternoon were spent over them; and some of them are in existence to this day, and have even been sold in London salerooms. Mollie had a small room behind her schoolroom, where she received callers and ate her midday meal. Often Ann Fannin came to see her at four o'clock, when the scholars had gone home; and the two had tea together, and talked of Stephen and planned their Australian life. It was quite decided that Ann was to go out to Australia with Mollie. "It's lonely I'd be in the Isle of Man, with you gone, and the farm on me hands, an' a woman alone isn't fitted for farmin'," said Ann.

"Australia is a wonderful place," Mollie assured her, "beautiful as the Isle of Man, and very big. They get land very cheap, and lots of convicts to work it; and the farms are lovely, they're saying, when the land's cleared."

"Eliza Quirk thinks Jude Kameen has something bad on his conscience," went on Ann. "He drinks shockin', an' is frightened of everything."

"He has need to be frightened, Ann."

"If we could only get evidence against him," sighed Ann, "and prove Stephen's innocence."

"We shall do that," declared Mollie firmly.

"It was lucky you met Captain and Mrs. Boyden in Liverpool. It has made a lot of difference to Stephen, them knowin' about him."

"I am very, very glad, Ann; and the time will soon come to make Stephen's position better still."

"Do you know anything for certain, Mollie?"

"I shall, I hope, in a few weeks, but I cannot tell even you, Ann."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Who will tell Jude Kameen?"

"I shall tell him myself."

"He is a dreadful man, Mollie; even Eliza Quirk is frightened of him at times; and poor Mrs. Lace locks herself in her room."

"When the time comes I shall dare," Mollie declared.

"Do you go to the Fort Island now, Mollie, to pray for Stephen?"

"I go to give thanks, Ann. I think God has answered my prayers."

"How did you say special prayers in Liverpool, Mollie?"

"As best I could; the churches are crowded there, with people in best bonnets; and on week-days they are shut up. I used to slip into a little Roman Catholic Church sometimes, to say my prayers alone."

"Oh! Mollie, the papists are wicked people."

"Not all of them, Ann; and I always began by telling God that I wasn't a papist. He heard me, I am sure, even there."

"It must be terrible to live where there is no sea, in places full of people," reflected Ann.

"It is; God has more chance to hear people by the sea and to help them. There's more room, somehow; and people's thoughts don't get mixed up with wickedness and cruelty. I often think there would never have been all those burnings of Bishops in Oxford and London if those places had been by the sea."

"They shot Illiam Dhone by the sea, Mollie."

"Yes; but they burned thousands and thousands of men and women in big fires, just for saying their prayers a bit different, and not wanting to use the same prayer book."

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

"They'd have never done that in the Isle of Man at all. Is there much sea in Australia, Mollie?"

"There's sea all round it, very beautiful, they're saying. Sydney Bay is as beautiful as Douglas Bay."

A week or so later Ann came in full of excitement. "Tom Tyson will be buying the farm," she said. "He's got a good bit of money left him from his old grandfather, Tobias Tyson, him that made the money in a public house over Peel way, an' Isabella is longin' terrible for the little islan'; and the children would be better by the sea."

"Yes," said Mollie, sympathetically.

"If me and Stephen was paid for our shares in the farm an' the mortgage paid too, there'd be a good bit of money to take us out to Australia."

Mollie was alert at once. "I've saved thirty pounds, Ann, and father left me one hundred pounds to come to me when I'm twenty-five, and I shall be that in a few weeks."

"We'd have money to get together a little farm out there, Mollie."

"Stephen must be cleared first; I'm not going to him when he's only a ticket-of-leave man. He is innocent."

"I know he is, but how 'ill it be proved?"

"It must be done, Ann; in two or three weeks now; have patience."

"What do you know, Mollie?"

"I know all, and I'm going to get it proved." With that Ann had to be content.

§ ii

It was Friday afternoon, the second anniversary of Stephen's trial, and Mollie was putting the school books

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

away after the scholars had departed. Her hands were trembling with eagerness. She was in a state of inner turmoil, and her eyes shone with unnatural brightness. In her pocket was the promised communication from Mrs. Dawes. The letter Stephen had written to Jude was enclosed with the envelope as well. The letter bore the date when the horse was stolen ; and it had been posted at Congleton. It had been placed by clumsy fingers in the envelope which Mollie had addressed to herself and given to Mrs. Dawes. It was accompanied by a childish scrawl from John Henry. "Gran sens it. She is verry bad. John Henry." It had come to her at midday, and she had been burning with excitement ever since. She would go to Douglas at once and see Jude Kameen, and she prayed for strength to enable her to confront him while she waited for Ann to come, for she had sent for her early in the afternoon.

"Mollie, how pale you look," cried Ann, surprised when she saw the usually composed Mollie white and trembling. "I'm late, but I've news for you."

"And I for you, Ann. Sit down, and rejoice. I have got proof of Stephen's innocence."

"Mollie, is it true?" and Ann burst into a passion of tears, crying, "At last, at last."

"Be calm, Ann, and listen ; I must go to Douglas at once and confront Jude Kameen with his guilt."

"What have you got, Mollie? How did you manage to get it?"

"I've got the letter Stephen wrote to Jude from Congleton ; and I can't tell you where I got it, except that God sent it, in answer to our prayers" ; and Mollie wept too, tears of thankfulness.

"I'll make some tea," said practical Ann, "it will do us

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

both good"; and she put the kettle on the fire and began to lay the table. "It would be better to take the letter to Lawyer Kissack, I'm thinking," counselled Ann. "Jude Kameen is a very dangerous man; and very bad he is too, like to die, they're saying."

"I must go myself, Ann. I promised to tell no person in the world but Jude Kameen himself; and I'll keep my word."

Over tea Ann imparted her news. Jude Kameen was dying. "He's very bad, Mollie. Eliza Quirk sent to me yesterday, poor soul; she was shivering with that influenza the doctors is callin' the bad colds. She'd heard from Mrs. Lace, who says she couldn't stop alone in that house any longer. Dr. Cornelius Key told her to send for Eliza, and she had to go as she was, with all the cold upon her, and as weak as a cat she was. She asked me to come an' stay a day or two in Douglas with her; an' I've been fixin' things up with Katty Coole, an' I thought of goin' this night to help Eliza. You'll hardly see Jude Kameen, Mollie. The man's too bad to see folks."

"Ann," said Mollie solemnly, "let me go and help Eliza Quirk."

"It's not a bad notion at all," allowed Ann. "Eliza likes you; and she has told me more than once that he's got something on his mind that's killin' the man. She's a notion of the truth, has Eliza; she's cute enough an' far-seein'."

So it was arranged. Mollie hired a car to drive her to Douglas; sent a message to her mother not to expect her home; then went off, while Ann walked back to Ballakilleen, her mind whirling with joy and excitement.

Mrs. Kezia Lace was distracted. The patient was in a

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

serious condition, at present he was unconscious, she said. Eliza Quirk welcomed Mollie warmly. "It's good of you to come, Mollie," she said. "I'm that bad with this cold, an' achin' in every limb I am; I didn't like to ask you yesterday, but I'm thinkin' that Jude will never be better. It's a haunted man he is; an' he'll never die easy till he rights the wrong he's done. You know what it is, Mollie?"

"I'm thinking I do know, Eliza; the poor man."

The two looked into each other's eyes. "You'll be gentle with him, Mollie, if he's well enough to talk?"

"I will," promised Mollie.

"Last night was a terrible time; he was roarin' an' trying to fight devils all the time. He called for you, too. He was drinkin' hard at the brandy this mornin', an' he fell on the floor on a broken brandy bottle. He'd nothin' on but his nightshirt, an' it cut into him terrible. Dr. Cornelius Key an' another doctor was pickin' broken glass out of his side for more than an hour. With little nippers they did it, an' it hurt terrible. Then they gave him something to send him to sleep, the poor soul."

It was nine o'clock when Dr. Cornelius Key came to see the patient. He found Eliza feverish and shivering as if with ague, and he sent her off to bed at once. Mrs. Lace and Mollie were to look after the patient for the night. "I can stay till Sunday night," Mollie promised, "and then Ann Fannin could come for a while."

"The patient must never be left," the doctor ordered; "and nourishment, milk, beef tea, lemonade and brandy must be given to him at intervals."

Mrs. Lace took the first part of the night duty, and Mollie got Eliza to bed and attended to her; then she lay down

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

to get some sleep until three o'clock, when she was to relieve Mrs. Lace in the sick-room.

"You'll be tender with Jude if he awakens and knows you," Eliza warned her.

"I will indeed, Eliza," promised Mollie.

§ iii

Jude was asleep when Mollie appeared to relieve Mrs. Lace. He was breathing heavily. "He's been queer in his head," Mrs. Lace reported. "It's frightened he is; he thinks they are hanging him, an' he screams somethin' dreadful."

"Does the wound trouble him?"

"He's in pain, but the wound's not to be touched till morning, when the doctor comes."

Mollie arranged the patient's medicine and nourishment, and seated herself behind a screen. For some hours she sat reading in silence, while Jude still slept an uneasy sleep. About seven o'clock he stirred, and called weakly for Eliza.

Mollie was at the bedside in an instant. "Will you have some milk?" she asked. He took it, and looked at her curiously.

"Bad dreams, Eliza," he muttered, "they were going to hang me."

"What for?" asked Mollie.

"You are not Eliza," he said.

"Eliza is in bed; she is not well enough to be here."

"You are Mollie Christane; how did you get here? Are you alive?"

"Oh, yes! I came to help to take care of you."

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Am I dead then?"

"No; you are here in your room."

"I must get up and go away, they are after me."

"Who?"

"The hangmen; there are lots of them, all looking for me."

"They will not come here. I will never let them in."

This seemed to comfort him for a little while.

"It is Mollie," he said again, looking at her wildly. "Have you come to torment me?"

"I will never torment you."

"What do you want?"

"I want you to make your peace with God, and confess your sins."

"What sins?"

"The sin of accusing Stephen Fannin of a crime, when he was innocent."

"Ah! am I going to die then?"

"Confess while there is time to repent."

"Confess what?"

"That you broke the kitchen window and took the stable key; that you denied Stephen wrote to tell you of the loss of the horse."

He sat up suddenly, and a saner light came into his eyes.

"And what is your evidence?"

"The evidence of Caroline Dawes, the grandmother of your son, John Henry."

"A pretty story indeed; and how comes Caroline Dawes to know?"

"Caroline Dawes was there; she saw you break the window and hide the key where you told Stephen to look for it."

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

"And who will believe this tale?"

"I have the letter Stephen wrote you from Congleton, offering to pay for the loss of the horse."

"You? And where did you get it?"

"God sent it to me," said Mollie softly.

Jude Kameen sat up. "Give me brandy," he said.

Mollie gave it to him.

"Now tell me, Mollie, what do you want me to do?"

"I want a full confession properly witnessed."

"What use would you make of it?"

"Get a free pardon for Stephen, and go to Australia to marry him."

"If you'd have married me, Mollie, it's a different man I'd have been; well, it didn't come off, it didn't come off."

Mollie said nothing. "I've lived in hell," he said, "ever since Stephen was transported, and now I'm going to die, Mollie."

"That lies with God," she said.

"The wages of sin is death; death, well, I've earned it." He lay some time thinking. "You were worth sinning for, Mollie, but it didn't come off, it didn't come off."

Mollie crimsoned as she thought of Stephen, and she cried softly. "Stephen never harmed you, and he might have been hanged," she sobbed.

"Ay! hangin's an easy death they say, soon over. It's tormented by the devils in hell I've been. You ought to pity me, Molly."

"I do pity you," she said; "the ways of transgressors are hard."

"They are so, you're right. I am going to die, Mollie, I know it. Well, I'll escape the hangman, anyhow."

Mollie's tears were falling; she could not speak.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Don't cry, Mollie. Death smooths things out, and you're going to marry Stephen; well, he's a lucky man. Kiss me, Mollie, just once, and I'll do what you want."

Mollie bent over him and kissed him.

"You've won, Mollie, you've won. Call Eliza, I'll make a confession."

"Eliza is too ill to be disturbed," she said.

"Call Mrs. Lace then. You shall write my confession for me."

She hesitated. "You will make all right for John Henry and Mrs. Dawes?" she pleaded.

"What do you know about them?"

"I've written the letters for Mrs. Dawes about John Henry for nearly two years, and now Mrs. Dawes is very ill."

"Good God! Why did you do it, Mollie?"

"To earn some money to help me to go to Australia to Stephen."

"You would have married a convict?"

"I'd have married Stephen whatever they called him," she said.

Jude Kameen groaned. "Life is a muddling business, Mollie; and we mortals are blind as newly born puppies. God help us! Make haste and fetch Mrs. Lace."

She came, a little troubled woman wrapped in a shawl; and Eliza, pale and shivering, followed her.

"Stay where you are, Eliza, and witness the death-bed repentance of a blackguard. Fetch pens and ink. Now, Mollie, write, and Eliza, listen."

Mollie, trembling, wrote as he dictated:—

"I, Jude Kameen, Advocate of Douglas, swore falsely that

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

Stephen Fannin, of Ballakilleen, Isle of Man, stole my mare. I lent it to him to ride to Stone. I contrived that it should be stolen from him at Congleton. The letter Stephen Fannin wrote to me at Congleton can be produced as evidence. To recompense Stephen Fannin, I will pay him one thousand pounds (£1000).

(Signed) Jude Kameen.

Witnessed by Eliza Quirk, Castletown.

Kezia Lace, Douglas.

“Keep it, Mollie,” he said, “and Mrs. Lace, send for the parson of St. Matthew’s, Dr. Cornelius Key, and Mr. Kissack the lawyer. I’ll finish my repentance before I die.”

§ iii

Later on, the doctor, the parson, and the lawyer met at Jude Kameen’s bedside. He directed Mr. Kissack to draw up a more formal confession, which was witnessed by the doctor and the parson. “Send it to the right quarter,” he directed, “and see that Stephen Fannin gets a free pardon.”

“You must rest now,” said Dr. Cornelius Key.

“No, doctor, give me brandy, I must put my house in order. Keep me fit for another half hour, and Kissack can do it now.”

It was Sunday night when Mollie returned home. Her mother was fretful, and Betty curious.

“Goin’ to Douglas, and what for then? An’ away two nights too.”

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"I was at Mr. Jude Kameen's, mother. He is dying, and Eliza Quirk asked me to go."

"What did he want with thee at all?"

"It is a mistake about Stephen; he got Lawyer Kissack to write to the Government of England about it. And Stephen will get a free pardon. He is giving Stephen £1000 to compensate him; and I am going to Australia to marry him."

"Mollie, art thee in thy senses, girl?"

"Yes, mother," said Mollie with a radiant face.

And Betty was so thunderstruck that she could only ejaculate, "Well, if ever, Mrs. Duff!"

"Leavin' thy mother a second time, too. It's cruel of thee, Mollie."

"A wife's place is with her husband," said Mollie soberly.

"Let Stephen come home then and attend to his farm then."

"Stephen's farm is to be sold to Tom Tyson, and Isabella; and Ann will come with me to Australia."

"Thou'st planned it all, I see," said her mother grimly. "An' Australia is farther away than Liverpool; thou'lt never see thy mother again, Mollie."

"An' to marry a convict," broke in Betty. "I'd never have thought it of thee, Mollie, so proud an' high like you were."

"Stephen is no convict; he is an innocent man."

"Who stole Jude Kameen's horse, then?"

"That has all been found out, Betty," said Mollie, "and Jude Kameen is dying."

"It's thy work if the man dies," scolded Mrs. Christane; "the man has followed thee about like a shadow; worshipped

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

thee he did ; an' when thou went to Liverpool it juſt broke his heart, ſo it did."

"An' drinkin' brandy helped a bit maybe," quoth Betty.

"To go out to live among convicts ; an' marry one of them, my child, my youngeſt born. Thou'lt break thy mother's heart, too, Mollie."

"Stephen is no convict, mother. It is a miſtake."

"Ay ! it's eaſy talkin' of miſtakes when the man's dyin' ; an' a thouſand pounds he's giving Stephen Fannin for thy ſake. The poor man an' his heart broke in his body ; an' thou to go furrin to marry a man that's been a convict."

"But, mother," ſaid Mollie gently, "I've been pledged to Stephen Fannin for two long years. I muſt go where my huſband is."

"Ay ! an' thy mother will not be at thy weddin' at all, nor any of thy kin."

"Ann Fannin will be there, mother."

"Stephen's kin, not thine, girl. Ah, well ! 'Ta lhane klinkyn ayns car-y-phooſee'" (There's many twiſts in the nuptial ſong).

"A thouſand pounds is a terrible lot of money," ſaid Betty ; "an' what'll you an' Stephen be doin' with it ?"

"We'll be farming."

"There's no need to go trapesing to Auſtralia to farm, when there's plenty of land in the Isle of Man," and Mrs. Chriſtane began to cry.

"There, mother, we'll have a nice cup of tea," coaxed Mollie. "I'll be home in ten years maybe."

"When thy mother is lyin' in Malew churchyard," lamented Mrs. Chriſtane.

Jude Kameen died the day after Mollie left him, and his will cauſed much comment throughout the Isle of Man.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

The bulk of his property went to his son John Henry ; and Eliza Quirk and Lawyer Kissack were appointed the boy's guardians. A competence was left to his cousin, Eliza Quirk, and an annuity to Mrs. Caroline Dawes, while £1000 was to be paid to Stephen Fannin.

"Well, if ever, Mrs. Duff!" quoth Betty; "to think of that ould rascal, Jude Kameen, havin' a wife in England an' a son too; there's no knowin' the wickedness that's in men."

"If Mollie had behaved proper to the man there was no need for him to be gettin' wives in England," said her mother.

"But the boy's a big boy, nine or ten, folks is sayin'; he must have been born when the first wife was alive."

"A poor body enough, was his first wife; and a *bogh* of a thing his mother was, Betsy Quine. The man knew no better."

"Poor soul, poor soul," said Mollie softly to Ann Fannin. "It's jealous of Stephen he was, an' the brandy killed him, but he wasn't all bad, Ann."

"Men are amazin'," marvelled Ann; "they do curious things."

"They are like little children," said Mollie. "Self-willed, an' doin' things out of jealousy; things that would harm themselves moſt of all. Poor Jude Kameen."

Kitty wept a great deal over Mollie's departure.

"An' the nice the girls were doin' at her school in Castletown, making silk pictures as good as real pictures too, an' learnin' to behave like ladies. What'll I do when Mollie's gone?"

"Go on sending them to Mrs. Gelling," suggested Michael, "the school isn't going away at all, Kitty."

"Mrs. Gelling isn't Mollie," rebelled Kitty.

MOLLIE'S VICTORY

"We shall miss you, my dear," said old Mrs. Quilliam to Mollie; "you have taught my grandchildren very nicely, and Mrs. Gelling is a worldly woman, fond of money, and with very little learning."

"I hope," said Mollie, "that Dinah and Dorcas may have a year at Mrs. Mardon's. It is a very respectable Seminary for young ladies, and Mrs. Mardon is most kind."

"We will try to arrange it, my dear," said old Mrs. Quilliam.

CHAPTER XX

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

“To thee as thou deserveſt.”—*Manx Proverb.*

§ i

It was a long journey to Australia in those days, and it took many months to accomplish. It was three months before Mollie and Ann got a passage and embarked. Michael and Tom Tyson made all arrangements and saw them off. A long, long journey they found it, but full of interest. Mollie kept a diary which is still extant. A simple document with records of daily events. A flight of flying fish was a wonder to her. “God made these little fishes with wings,” she writes, “to escape their enemies. Thanks be to God for His goodness to all created things.” A baby was born during the voyage to a poor woman who had recently lost her husband; and Mollie and Ann made the baby’s entire outfit. Then they made fine shirts for Stephen, dropping many tears over them, as they reflected on the coarse clothes he had been made to wear. “You’d give the moon to Stephen if you could, Mollie,” said Ann, smiling, as Mollie marked his garments with her fine, silken hair.

“I’d cut the moon in little pieces to make a smooth path for him to walk upon,” said Mollie with a radiant face.

“It’s glorified you look when you talk of Stephen,” remarked Ann wistfully. “This love you talk of must be a fine thing.”

“It’s the most beautiful thing in the world, Ann; and please God there’s a man over in Australia for you too.”

“I haven’t that much opinion of men,” quoth Ann with

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

a wry smile. "I've had no sweetheart but Charles Kinrade, and see how he treated me! To sail away to Ireland and marry the first *trouse* of a girl he met."

"He was a bit of a boy, Ann; there was no real love in your sweethearting," said Mollie wisely. "You'll meet the real man yet, and thank God for him too."

The two occupied themselves by embroidering petticoats for themselves, for as Mollie said, there would be plenty of nice people out there, "good English folk," and their clothes must be as "good as fingers could make them."

"I'm not educated like you, Mollie, to meet nice folks," said Ann sadly. "I don't talk right, like the English folks at all. I notice it every time I hear you talk to that English parson."

Mollie laughed. "If that is all, Ann, I'll soon teach you. We'll do grammar every day."

"I'll never remember it," sighed Ann. "Just tell me, Mollie, everything I say wrong, and I'll copy you."

"Yes, and you'll do grammar too. I learnt a lot from Dr. Lindley Murray's book, and you shall learn it too." So study was instituted as well as sewing, to relieve the tedium of the voyage.

In due course the General of the Convict Settlement received the news of Stephen's innocence. He was a humane man, and truly rejoiced that one of his black sheep was white after all. He sent for Captain Boyden.

"Fannin's tale is true enough," he said; "he is cleared; we must officially recognize his innocence and recompense him."

"I always believed in him," was Captain Boyden's reply.

"He is directing your farm, isn't he? Is he any good?"

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"He is an excellent farmer. Steady, and he knows his crops."

"Would he be inclined to settle out here?"

"That is his intention. He belongs to the Isle of Man; and a charming girl—a friend of my wife's—is coming out to marry him."

"That clinches the matter; we'll do the thing handsomely," pronounced the General.

To say that Stephen was acutely unhappy in his work on the farm at George's River would be an exaggeration; but he was dull, apathetic, and depressed. In his soul burned bitter resentment against the injustice of his case, and fierce hatred against Jude Kameen. The muscles of his fingers ached impotently to twine themselves around the villain's throat and crush the life out of him. It seemed incredible that such monstrous misfortune should have befallen him. In the early days he was cheered by Mollie's faithfulness, and he dreamed of the establishment of his innocence; but time dragged on and nothing happened; only the dreary monotony of a convict's life with a hopeless outlook before him. Occasional letters from Mollie and Ann lifted his gloom; but he worked mechanically, hopelessly, in dull despair. His conduct was good, his work intelligent, and he suffered no cruel hardships or bitter indignities that destroy the manhood and make a man a hunted beast, for the commanding officer was a rare man, and was personally interested in Stephen, having heard the chaplain's account of him, and the commendation of Captain Boyden. Later in the history of Australian convict life, when other administrators came to the task, the condition of the prisoners became indeed deplorable, as harsh regulations were instituted. Stephen was fortunate in being under

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

the rule of that particular General, and Mollie ever afterwards thanked God that it was so. The advent of Captain Boyden and his young wife brought real cheer to Stephen. The Captain was impressed by Stephen's sincerity, and he took a liking to the young Manxman, while Isabel always managed to whisper a word about Mollie. Still, under the most favourable conditions, the lot of a convict is hard ; and the hardship was intensified by the consciousness of innocence. He thought of Mollie with passionate longing, and his desire for freedom was unendurable. He felt stained, fouled, degraded. He would never rise out of the mire, and possess his beautiful Mollie. Isabel cried with joy when she heard the good news, and realized that Mollie was on her way out. She insisted on going out to the farm at once to bring Stephen to their home. "Of course, he will stay with us, Harry, till Mollie comes ; and he must learn that he is *not* a convict now."

Harry hesitated.

"We will both go this minute and fetch him ; he must be petted and cheered and made much of. Mollie shall never see him as he is."

"But it is a long ride in the sun, my dear."

"I'd ride a hundred miles for Mollie's sweetheart," was all Isabel said.

§ ii

Stephen was dazed and a little suspicious at first, but he drew a long breath of relief when the matter was explained to him. "So the villain confessed on his death-bed, and cheated the hangman," he said.

"It was Mollie that made him do it," put in Isabel ; "dear

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

Mollie, she is on her way out ; she will be here in a few days perhaps."

Stephen crimsoned. "Am I fit to see her?" he said. "A convict—a degraded man?"

"You will be recompensed, Fannin," soothed Harry. "Our chief is a fine old boy. He'll make it right, never fear."

"Nothing can right a wrong that destroys a man's soul," gloomed Stephen.

Isabel interposed. "You must think of Mollie," she said. "Only of Mollie, the brave darling. She would have married you had you been in chains, Stephen Fannin."

"Look at me, a convict, the degradation will ever be upon me."

"Fiddlesticks," said Harry. "You are an innocent man ; the world will know it."

"I've nothing, nothing in the world but these," and a sob choked his utterance as Stephen looked down at his convict clothes.

"But you are coming home now with Harry and me. You are going down at once to the creek to cast your convict clothes for ever ; to dip in the river and dress in a suit of Harry's we have brought it with us," proclaimed Isabel.

"And a cloak of the General's to cover the rents you will make in my puny garments with your brawny limbs," laughed Harry. "My tailor will soon fix you up, young giant."

"Go now, *now*, with Harry," insisted Isabel. "We have a hamper, the servants are fixing up lunch for us. We want to see you as an honest Manxman. We will drink your health, and dear Mollie's, and then you shall show me the clearing and fencing, and advise me about a garden."

The site of the house was on a bank above a creek. It

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

was not yet built, but the timber was there ready sawn, and the plan mapped out. Some acres of land had been cleared and fenced. Beyond the fences the clanging of axes was heard. Blue smoke circled upward in the still air, for the men were burning the scrub to make the land yield a good pasture for sheep and cattle. The way of the creek was alive with the yellow glory of the wattles. The cleared land, blackened and smudged after the fires, lent to the scented air that acrid smell of burning wood. The stables and men's huts were yellow in the sunshine. Isabel instructed the servants to lay out a trestled table and produce the cold meal and wines. When the two men returned she greeted Stephen with a demure curtsy. "It is an honour to meet you, Mr. Fannin," she said.

Stephen abashed, in clothes too small for him, smiled at her. It was a pleasant meal, out there in the clearing of the bush with the golden wattles behind them; and the two kind-hearted young people partly succeeded in making Stephen feel at ease under the new conditions. A solemn toast was drunk to Mollie, and they all pledged themselves to do what they could to make her life happy. It was a softened and hopeful Stephen who took up his abode under the hospitable roof of Harry and Isabel. Their kind sympathy and hopeful outlook soon put him entirely at his ease; and in his eagerness to meet Mollie he almost forgot his former sufferings and shame. Then one day came great doings. Stephen, with his kind host and hostess, were invited to Government House in Paramatta, where he was to be received by the old General and his wife, and the chief officials; and his innocence was to be proclaimed abroad.

Stephen, attired in well-fitting garments, was shy; but he kept his stolid Manx face, and pretended to be cool and

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

collected as he was driven to Government House with Harry and Isabel ; Harry, correct, slim, and smart in his uniform, and Isabel in an elegant gown and with a gay parasol. As they drew near their destination, Stephen caught glimpses of fine chaises bowling along, pretty ladies, horses and scarlet uniforms ; and with an effort he controlled himself, for as he afterwards told Mollie, his " coward convict soul " had well-nigh taken possession of him. The Governor's house was girt round with smooth green lawns, where a tame young kangaroo leapt at play. They passed through the gates where the sentry paced ; and Stephen saw the low, white walls of Government House with the long French windows and latticed shades, opening upon the lawn. Then he found himself shaking hands with the General and his kind, grey-haired wife, who murmured words of sympathy ; and presently a pretty little ceremony was enacted when the King's pardon and regret were tendered to Stephen, together with a piece of parchment sealed with the seal of the Colony, and bearing the signature of the General. It was the title deed of grant of land of two thousand five hundred acres, situated in an alluvial district within forty miles of Sydney. Stephen responded properly in the well-chosen phrases Harry had suggested ; and the company adjourned for luncheon, and Stephen was the honoured guest. When it was all over, and he had been congratulated and made much of, he retired to his own room and wept for pure joy. He was a free man, reinstated, the taint of the convict was gone for ever. His self-respect returned as he recalled the warm hand-clasp of the General. And Mollie was coming out to him. His Mollie with her beautiful eyes and sweet devotion. He pictured her, as she stood in the silver moonlight bidding him farewell at Ballasalla. It was like a fairy

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

tale, and Stephen told himself that it had almost been worth while enduring convict life for the sake of the beautiful future that awaited him.

§ iii

They planned to have a quiet wedding from Captain Boyden's house with Ann as bridesmaid. But their plans miscarried. The story of the handsome Manxman falsely accused, and the faithful and lovely Mollie, touched the hearts of the people, and everybody thronged to the wedding. "The bonniest bride that Sydney ever had," was Captain Boyden's comment as he kissed Mollie. Presents showered upon the young couple. Mollie hesitated about taking them. "They're from people I never saw," she said. "Why should they be so kind to me?"

"Because you are *you*, dear Mollie, and Stephen is *Stephen*, and the world likes love stories and lovers," said Isabel.

Stephen hesitated about taking Jude Kameen's money. "I don't like taking a villain's money," he said.

"He is dead," Mollie reminded him.

"He was not fit to live, Mollie. Nobody could forgive the like of him."

"God forgave him, Stephen."

"It's God's business to forgive. All right, Mollie, we'll think no ill of the dead."

"The farm will want to be stocked," said Ann, with Manx caution, "and there's a lot of stock wanted, Stephen."

"He wasn't all bad, Stephen. He wanted to make amends," said Mollie earnestly, and Stephen kissed her and said :—

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"We'll borrow the money, sweetheart, and when we're rich we'll pay it back to John Henry." And they left it at that.

Stephen applied for twenty convicts to work for him, and he got all he asked. He went down to survey his land, and begin clearing, leaving Mollie and Ann to get together the household furnishings. In a few weeks he came back to buy stock. He was fastidious, and his livestock was the very best that could be obtained. He intended to grow wheat and Indian maize. When he had collected his belongings, the party journeyed to their home. Mollie never forgot that journey through the bush in the bullock waggon. To this day her grandchildren tell the story to their little ones when they tire of fairy tales ; the furniture, kitchen utensils, and farm tools were lashed under canvas ; and she and Ann sat upon a feather bed with their backs against the top of a kitchen table ; and Stephen, in a white drill jacket and high boots, rode ahead with a couple of men, their guns resting on the saddles.

"Is it wild beasts they are afraid of, Mollie?" asked the fearful Ann.

"Blacks too, maybe ; but there is nothing to fear. God is with us," said wise Mollie, as the bullock waggon rumbled slowly through the bush under the burning sun. The road passed from the open bush, where the sunlight lay as flame on the parched earth, through the giant gums. "It is like a big church, so still," said Mollie.

The sky through the break in the trees was blue as the sea, and the sunlight lay on the ground in yellow-red splashes. From the far-off tree-tops rose the sad sounds as of an organ, when the wind stirred them, wafting abroad the incense of the bush.

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

"Listen!" said Mollie, "surely there is music. Stephen, listen to that pretty piping."

"The call of the lyre bird to its mate, my dear," was the prosaic Stephen's reply. Through the broken twilight, with shafts of sunlight piercing the gloom, they went slowly, and the driver cracked his long whip, and encouraged the bullocks to proceed by half-smothered curses.

"It smells like the sweet spices the wise men brought to the baby Jesus," remarked Ann. "Look, Mollie, the ticking of the bed isn't as good as we get in Liverpool, at all," and Ann examined the new bed ticking.

Mollie was looking at the stray sunrays on the thick undergrowth of musk, myrtle and giant ferns.

"There's the smell of musk and eucalyptus," she said, "and a hundred other lovely scents."

"But there's no gorse, nor ling, and the smell of the sea is different," lamented Ann.

Like white fire the sun struck them, as the timber thinned, and they lost the protecting shade of the gum-trees. Mollie laughed with joy at the colours of the parrots, grey and pink, green and blue, and she told Ann of the wonders of Mrs. Mardon's parrot with its fund of conversation. Myriads of black flies swarmed; insects chirped around, above and below them; clouds of white cockatoos flew by shrieking at them; and gold-winged butterflies sported in the white sunlight; the wattles sprang as yellow light to indicate the gully's track; and the eucalyptus trees in all their glory of young green leaf and red-tipped boughs trembled in the smoke-blue haze beyond. At night they camped beneath a cloudless indigo sky, and Stephen pointed out the Southern Cross shining in splendour among the stars, "Stars that never saw the little Isle of Man," lamented Ann.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

It was on a hill-top above the creek that Mollie found her new home. Only a fraction of the land had been cleared, and beyond was the bush, green as young pasture land, rolling on and on to the mountain ridge. Stephen stood with Mollie and Ann, looking across the clearing at the smoke rising in the still air, and curling mistily towards the mountains.

"'Tis fine pasture land it 'ill make for the sheep," exulted Ann.

"Thousands and thousands of them," ruminated Stephen.

"Our life will be busy, but so happy, Stephen," said radiant Mollie.

And in truth the three made excellent Australian settlers ; cautious, adaptable, hopeful and hard working, the Manx folk are apt to thrive in an unfamiliar environment. Ann soon deserted them and married Owen Edmunds, a young widower, and their nearest neighbour. Stephen prospered. His lands grew spacious as the bush rolled back under the axe and fire. The cattle increased ; the crops flourished ; the orchard gave generously, and Mollie's garden was a Paradise of colour and fragrance. Mollie's life flowed on happily and busily. She loved the home of her adoption and she adored her two children—Frederick Stephen and Christian Isabel. The old General himself was sponsor to the boy, and Isabel was godmother to the girl. Stephen and Mollie began to grow rich. Their house was low, timber-built, spacious and very comfortable, with deep verandahs, large rooms, and surrounded by flowers. Mollie often looked out on the prospect of peaceful pasture lands, and wooded hills rolling into the blue distance ; and thanked God for her blessings. "If I could only show the children to mother and Betty, and the farm to Michael and Kitty, how happy I'd be, Stephen," she said.

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

§ iv

A last peep at Mollie in her Australian home. She is in the kitchen, a roomy, rafted, wholesome room with clematis blowing in at the open window ; a room smelling of timber, soap, and odours of the bush ; a room shining with pewter and copper. She talked to her cook, an Essex woman, of hams to be boiled, chickens to be roasted, lambs to be sacrificed, cream jellies, fruit pies and cakes to be made. "The best we have got, Mrs. Popperwell ; nothing is too good for my dearest friend," she concluded.

"Indeed, yes, ma'am," acquiesced Mrs. Popperwell with a wide smile.

Then Mollie washed her best china with her own hands, an old-fashioned tea set, with forget-me-nots and wide green water-lily leaves, very quaint and charming. "Tell Becky we will use these every day," she ordered, and Mollie smiled, for Isabel, her husband, and three children were coming on a visit, and would arrive this very day. Then she had to visit her storehouse, where an old Scotchwoman was weighing the rations. Outside, a group of blacks squatted and chattered. "Give them a little flour," ordered Mollie, smiling at them. Mollie stood watching the weighing like a good housewife, and sniffing in that odour of wholesome storehouses, that nobody can describe, a kind of composite smell of flour, cheese, pickling-brine, oatmeal, tea, apples and coffee-beans and tallow candles.

Three hours later she sat on the deep verandah with Isabel, looking toward the blue mountains, and watching the white cockatoos gorging themselves with the seeds of the wattle.

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

"Mollie, darling," smiled Isabel, "how nice to see you in your pretty home."

"Dear Isabel," murmured Mollie, "you look as young as the day I first met you, in spite of your three big children."

"In the old schoolroom, teaching parsing, 'Procrastination is the thief of time,' " laughed Isabel.

"God sent me to Mrs. Mardon in answer to all the prayers I prayed," said Mollie seriously.

"A quaint darling you were in a brown print gown with pink seaweed all over it; don't you remember?" and Isabel had tears in her eyes, and so had Mollie, for ladies showed their passing emotions in those far-off days.

The two sat amid the flowers of the verandah talking of their children, and looking across the gleam of the silver creek through the golden wattle blossoms.

"Harry says," prattled Isabel, "that the boys are to go to school in England, and I shall go myself and take little Lettice with me. She shall go to school in England, too, bless her."

"But there are schools in Sydney," faltered Mollie.

"Not for boys; not the right schools to make them into English gentlemen. Harry says they must go to Eton and Oxford."

"Oh!" And Mollie paled at the thought of parting with her Freddie. "But if they are college bred, they will not be wanting to come back to Australia."

"Of course not; they won't want to farm. They will go into the Army, or Church, or Parliament in their own country, Harry says, and Harry is always right."

Mollie registered a vow on the spot, that Freddie should go to England too, but it would be hard to part with him.

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

"Must they go when they are little?" asked troubled Mollie.

"Not till they are thirteen, Harry says," and Mollie was comforted.

Meanwhile Stephen was showing his farm to Major Boyden, who was mightily interested.

"There's money enough to be made in this country with land," the Major observed.

"That is true. With ordinary luck anyone can farm in these times. Money seems to come by itself in this country."

"I want to discuss the matter with you, Stephen. I'm thinking of selling my commission and buying more land. It is not like the old days, when the old General was here."

"Indeed it's not," said Stephen; "the rebellions among the convicts are amazing. The rules get harder and harder. The system is wrong from the root. But if you want land, get it soon. Now is the time of the fat kine, and the time will not last for ever."

And Major Boyden agreed with him. He, too, under Stephen's advice, bought land; and Mollie taught Isabel how to be a farmer's wife.

§ v

Just ten years after Mollie had driven with Ann in the bullock waggon to Stephen's clearing, she set sail with her husband, two children, and the young English governess, to visit her native island, for she was rich now, as Phœbe Fell had foretold. Her beautiful house was completed, and she had carriages to ride in, and a fountain to play in her little sunk garden near the gully. The cup cards were

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

indeed thick around her. Love, happiness, children, were hers, and plenty of money to bring up the children without stint. Stephen had fifty thousand pounds invested, and he told Mollie that in another ten years they would have half a million. Mollie paled at the immensity of the sum. "What can we do with it all, Stephen?" she asked.

"We'll go home, girl, and retire; and see how Freddie and little Belle grow up."

"It's a great responsibility," said Mollie. "We must learn how to use it wisely." Mollie wrote home to say that they were taking a year off for a visit; but before the letter arrived she was there herself with her family. They stayed in Douglas, and leaving the children with the governess, she and Stephen set off to visit their homes in a hired side-car. Mollie got out at Ballasalla and went in softly at the back door. Mrs. Christane was not lying in Malew churchyard, as she had dismally foretold; she was sitting in her high chair counting her eggs intently, with the same brown front and parting of black tape visible under her cap. "Shockin' how little I'm gettin' for me eggs," she grumbled; "it's not worth keeping hens at all."

"'Deed then," said Betty, "the hens keep themselves, the craturs! An' when they're not broody, nor castin' their feathers, it's little trouble they are, at all."

"I wish I could have brought you a sitting of eggs from Australia," said a soft voice at the door, and the gracious, beautiful young matron that was Mollie herself, stood there smiling tenderly at them. The same Mollie with her soft eyes, dimples, beautiful little head and soft crooning voice. "But the grand clothes at her, and the way with her, as mild as milk, but the high, as if she owned the islan'. It struck me all of a heap," Betty confided afterwards to Maria Brideson.

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

"Mollie, Mollie, my little Mollie! Is it thyself, girl, really thyself?" quavered Mrs. Christane. "I was thinkin' I'd never see thee again, Mollie."

"Yes, mother, God is very good to us," and Mollie kissed the old wrinkled cheek, and held the thin hand.

"An' is Stephen with thee, an' the little ones?"

"Yes, mother, Stephen has gone on to Ballakilleen to see Isabelle and Tom Tyson."

"An' the grand thou'rt, an' the rich too," admired Betty. "An' it's a carriage thou'rt ridin' in, away in Australia, I'm hearin'."

"The distances are great," apologized Mollie; "one must ride in a bullock waggon or a carriage."

"A gig isn't good enough for thee, then?" said Betty marvelling.

"Things are different in Australia," said Mollie softly.

"You'll have tea, Mollie, or a glass of wine, maybe? Betty, get out the bottle of port wine Michael sent me."

"Mother," said Mollie, half laughing and half tearful, "if you'll let me go into the dairy and get myself a cup of butter-milk, an' a piece of barley bread with Manx butter, I'd like it better than anything in the world."

"My own little Mollie," said the proud old woman. "Thee'st not forgotten thy old home."

"An' fine children you've got, Mollie," Betty said, "an' a governess for them, an English body. It's frightened I'll be to meet the like."

Mollie smiled. "Don't be makin' a *toot* of thyself, Betty," she said, munching the barley bread. "Mother, it's lovely butter you've got."

"As good as thee hast in Australia?"

"Better, mother, better. It's the green grass that grows

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

in the island makes it sweet. The moist grass and the mist of the sea helps the cows wonderful."

The gratified pride of the old woman's smile was pretty to see. "An' thee'll bring thy children to see their old granny?"

"We've come thousands of miles to do so, mother. They will come to-morrow. Freddie is getting a big boy now, and little Belle is as sweet as a Manx rose, bless her."

"Come to dinner, all of thee, a right proper dinner we'll have, Mollie. The fattest chickens and the sweetest ham in the islan'."

"You'll not be bringin' the English governess, Mollie?" cried Betty, alarmed. "A proud miss of a thing; castin' her eyes on our Manx ways an' despisin' them."

"No, Betty; but she's quite a nice girl, and she's roughed it in Australia."

"Farmin's good in Australia. Thee canst put a hundred or so by now and then, I'm thinkin'," probed Betty.

"Not hundreds, Betty, but thousands," corrected Mollie softly.

"Thousands of pounds in savin's?" questioned Betty sharply.

"Ay! and tens of thousands at times, Betty."

"The Lord bless me!" ejaculated Betty in amaze.

"Thou canst never save that out of farming?" said her mother.

"There's lots of land out there, mother, and the farms are big."

"Farms is middlin' big in the Isle of Man too," protested the old woman.

"Yes, mother, but there are farms as big as the Isle of Man in Australia."

THE CROWDING OF THE CUP CARDS

"Shee bannee mee!" gasped Mrs. Christane; "that's terrible big. It isn't natural, a big country like that. Is Australia as big as England then?"

"Ever so much bigger."

"Well, if ever, Mrs. Duff, who'd have thought it? There's gold enough in that country then?"

"Maybe, mother, but in the little island here 'there's gold on the cushags yet.'"

"Ay! on the cushags, but not in our pockets. Well, girl, 'Lhiat myr hoillo' (To thee as thou deservest), and thou has got thy deservings," and the cross lines on the old woman's face straightened and she beamed proudly on Mollie.

Dinah came in, tall and straight. She blushed when her Aunt Mollie kissed her.

"Yes," said Granny complacently, "an' Dinah is thinkin' of marrying, so she is."

"I hope he is a nice man," said smiling Mollie.

"It is Mr. Kaighan," asserted Dinah proudly. "He used to come to see Granny, and now he comes to see me."

"He is a sensible age," approved Granny; "none of your young flither-me-jigs."

Kitty, overjoyed, cried when she saw Mollie. "'Tis yourself indeed, Mollie, beautiful as ever, but high up like, and where are your children?"

"They will come to see you to-morrow, Kitty."

"It's old married women we are, Mollie, with these children around us, and Dinah ready to marry and make a grandmother of me before my time."

They were wonderful, these children of Kitty's. Dorcas could keep house better than Kitty herself. Rosaleen could paint real portraits just like life. Patience did sums like a lawyer, and kept all her father's books. Bride was astonish-

CLAD IN PURPLE MIST

ing, and could write poetry as good as any in the school books, and as for Faith she was a beauty. "Something like thyself, Mollie," and Faith came at her mother's call. Like a piece of Dresden china was the lovely little maid, her hair enveloping her like a cloud down to her knees. "I had never such lovely hair," said Mollie, delighting in the child's beauty, "and where is Matthew?"

"He's helping Granny with the farmin'."

"And how's the Latin?"

"It's hard for the lad. Grandmamma has paid for him at the new College—King William's 'tis called—facin' Hango Hill. She wants him to go to Oxford College, and there's examinations too hard for him, poor boy."

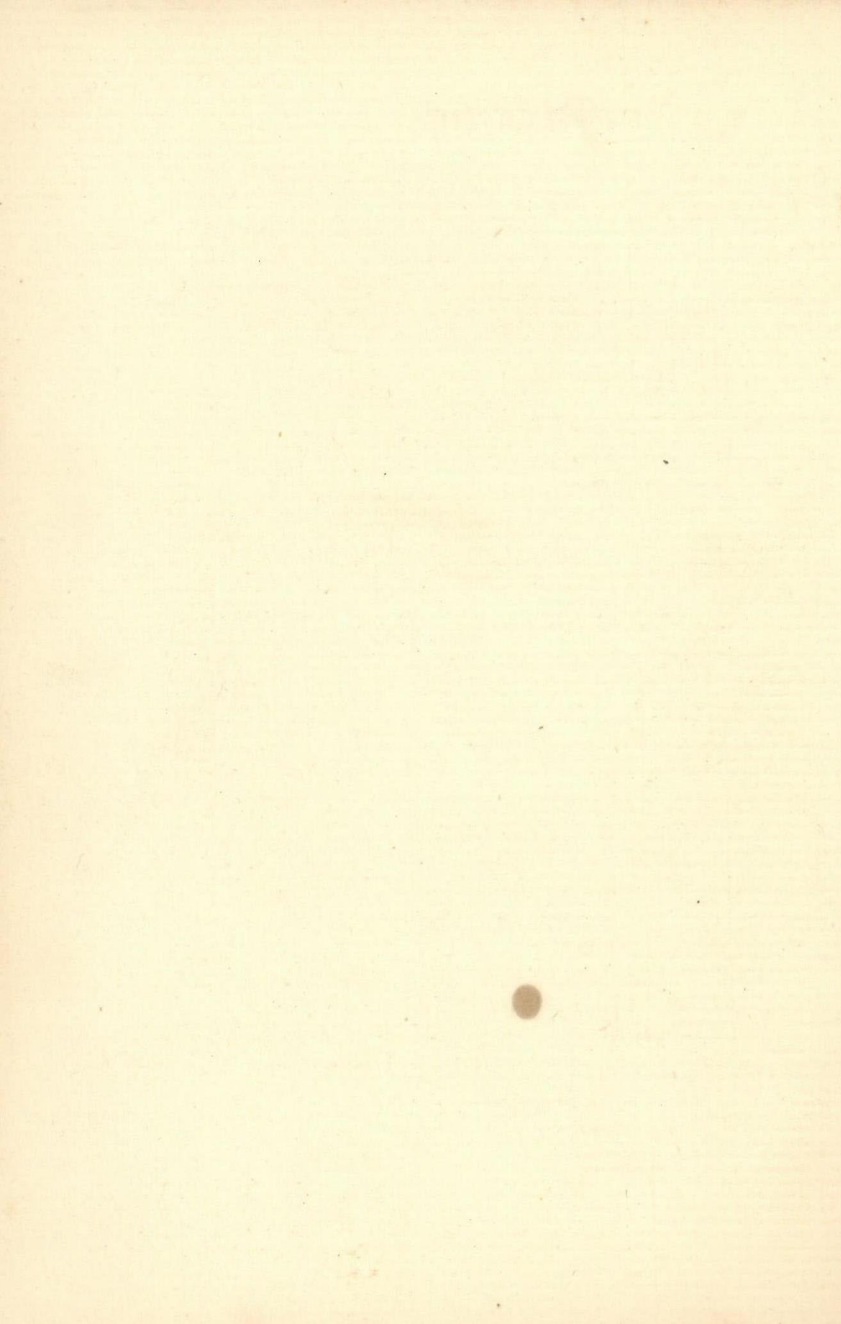
"And how is old Mrs. Quilliam?"

"Smart for her age, but failing. Ah! here is Michael."

"Mollie girl," he said, "I am right glad to see thee," and he grasped her hands.

But my tale is ended. We will leave Mollie with her kindred.

EPILOGUE



EPILOGUE

“For the great things on earth are small things
And the longest life is a span.”

Lindsay Gordon.

IN the Spring of 1914, Jellis Farthing of London, the daughter of Faith Quilliam, was visiting her old Aunt Patience in the Isle of Man.

“It’s a fine day for a drive, Jellis,” said Aunt Patience; “tell old Bobby to be round with the carriage in ten minutes or so. Mind you wrap up warm. Come, Katty, an’ fix my veil and sealskin cloak.”

Jellis waited in the hall till Aunt Patience appeared, an erect old woman, tall, even stately; a wonderful old woman, and she read and wrote still without spectacles; tended her greenhouses herself; and even worked in her immaculate garden. Her smooth, greying hair was parted in the middle, after the fashion of forty years ago. Her grey eyes had the look of youth in them, which those mortals blessed with vitality never lose. There was hardly a wrinkle in her face, and her almost classic features retained their clear outlines. She came downstairs unaided. Jellis marvelled at her. Aunt Patience was just ninety-five, and she hardly looked seventy. “We’ll go to Derbyhaven, an’ on to the Fort Island, then round to Ballasalla, and have a look at the Abbey, then round by Malew to see the graves in the churchyard.”

“Yes,” agreed Jellis.

“Fetch the big plaid shawl, Katty, for Miss Farthing. You’ll need it; the air is apt to be chill off the sea.”

Castletown Bay still shimmered blue and bright, as Michael Quilliam saw it nearly ninety years ago. Hango Hill, with its

EPILOGUE

ruin, still looked seaward. Castle Rushen, Scarlet, the Stack, and Langness, were unaltered. The cottages at the Spout were gone, and half a dozen boarding houses put up. The fine group of buildings comprising King William's College with its chapel, playing fields, and masters' houses, stood far back from the road facing the sea. The Big Cellar still stood gaunt and sinister; the Race-Course was enclosed and turned into a golfing ground; and a fine lighthouse stood on Langness Point.

Derbyhaven was almost unaltered, but the shipping had left it deserted. Douglas with its piers claimed the traffic. The Fort Island still stood encircled by the sea, but there was a driving road to it, and an hotel was erected there for golfers and summer visitors. They drove to the Fort Island.

"We'll get out," said Aunt Patience; "I want to see the church again."

"Will it be too much for you?"

"No, I'm quite well, but at times a bit weak."

"It's the unsettled spring weather, Aunt Patience."

"Age maybe has something to do with it," and the old woman's mouth twisted dryly after the fashion of Granny Christane's.

"Lots of good money has been lost over that hotel," said Aunt Patience as they walked to the church.

"Shall we go there to rest?" suggested Jellis.

"No, I want to see the church."

The bleak roofless little church that had wintered centuries of storms, was still there; now enclosed and protected from casual trippers. They looked inside, the nettles still flourished at the east window; but the doorway was barred. Aunt Patience gazed at it thoughtfully. "Aunt Mollie used to come here to say her prayers when I was a little girl," she said.

EPILOGUE

"Why?"

"Let us sit awhile on this boulder. I like the sea an' the rocks, the gulls, an' the smell of the gorse and this little chapel. I liked them in my childhood."

"Will you take cold?" asked Jellis.

"No; you must have heard of Aunt Mollie. She married a farmer from over Scarlet way. Stephen Fannin was his name. He was a convict in Australia and she went out to marry him. Your mother will have told you about her."

"Yes, she has, many a time."

"She used to come here in all weathers and pray for him, and sure enough he was proved innocent. They made lots of money in Australia. Aunt Mollie lived to be nearly ninety. She was worth about a million pounds. Her husband left everything to her."

"Yes," said Jellis.

"Her son and daughter are both dead now, but there are her grandchildren; do you ever hear of them at all in London?"

"There's Sir Stephen Fannin, the Member of Parliament, he's in the Cabinet now."

"That is Aunt Mollie's grandson. She was a wonderful woman. There are not the like now."

Jellis reflected on the modern education for women and wondered, as she recalled Aunt Mollie's story. "I may never see the Chapel or Fort Island again, Jellis," said Aunt Patience. "I'm glad I came."

They drove to Derbyhaven; its shore was tidy and well kept; people no longer killed their pigs and threw their rubbish on it. They stopped at a pretty low green and white house near the stream. "I'll call and see Mrs. Pingen," said Aunt Patience. "I may never see her again."

EPILOGUE

Mrs. Pingeen was at home, and they sat in her drawing room, talking of old times. Aunt Patience glanced around the room, and her thoughts were far back in her childhood. She smiled, an old woman's slow smile. "The first school I ever went to was in this room," she said, and she proceeded to tell the story of Mrs. Fisher's school, recalling the incident of the pink and white sugar stick. "It was a long time ago, almost ninety years ; things are very different now."

"And there has been a new front put to the house, with a bay window," observed Mrs. Pingeen. "Forty years ago we had it done."

"Yes," said Aunt Patience, "and to me ninety years seems like yesterday."

They resumed their drive, and in passing the stile, the same stile where little Patience had sat and wept bitter tears over the bundle of cottons, Aunt Patience told the story to her niece Jellis. "It was," she concluded, "one of the bitterest tragedies of my life, for you don't feel things so much when you grow out of childhood."

Jellis smiled sympathetically. "I've had my sorrows like other people," went on the old woman. "I'm nearly ninety-six, the last left alive, there is no one now, with the memories of far-off days. It makes me feel lonely at times."

"It must, indeed," said Jellis.

"See," she said later, "here's Granny Christane's house. It went to young Mat Quilliam. My brother Matthew's grandson. He sold it, and he and his extravagant young wife squandered the money. Good Manx land of me mother's family. I don't like strangers to get it."

She drove on to the Abbey. The old ruins were almost gone. The place was turned into a jam factory, and fine fruit grew again in the old Abbey lands. Aunt Patience

EPILOGUE

pointed out the house where she saw the curse taken off the cow. "Nobody believes these things now," she said, "but in those days the old folks had a knowledge of their own, better than all this teaching about drains and tap water. I crave sometimes for a good drink of well water."

They drove on to Malew churchyard, and Aunt Patience walked among the graves with the old tombstones, pointing out to Jellis the graves of her forefathers for three or four generations. "I never pass by the churchyard," she said, "since I was a little girl; we always came to look at the graves, and now I feel drawn to them. I shall soon be with them."

They resumed their seats in the carriage. "Drive home, Bobbie," said Aunt Patience. "I'm a bit tired," she said to Jellis. "I want a good hot cup of tea."

After tea she revived, and she sat talking to her niece till late, reviving many memories. "I shall, maybe, not be here to tell you things when you come again," she said.

But she was, for Aunt Patience lived to be ninety-nine.

THE END

[It may interest readers to know that the account of the convict ship is based on facts of which an account may be found in *England's Exiles*, by C. A. Browning, published early in the nineteenth century.]







